

Grow Smart Northampton

Executive Order 418 Northampton Community Development Plan

Adopted by the Northampton Planning Board December 2, 2003 (unanimous vote)

Accepted by City Council Industry Committee, December 8, 2003 (unanimous vote)

Northampton Housing Partnership, Resolution December 16, 2003 (unanimous vote): "The Northampton Housing Partnership commends the Commonwealth for recognizing the importance of comprehensive planning and the important issues facing cities in the Commonwealth; and further applauds the inclusion of the assessment of housing needs as part of that process and the *Grow Smart Northampton* report that the EO418 funding enabled. We look forward to using the valuable tool in our planning process."

Adoption and acceptance of the plan does not imply endorsement of the consultant's recommendations in the Appendices. *Grow Smart Northampton* is part of the information gathering phase for an upcoming Northampton Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan. As such it is a work in progress. The plan will be revised and fully endorsed after the public input portion of the city's comprehensive planning process.



This plan was developed using funds provided pursuant to Massachusetts Executive Order 418 program. While all the funds for the plan and consultants were provided by the Commonwealth and the format of the planning was partially determined by the EO418 guidelines, all of the conclusions are those of the City of Northampton.

Grow Smart Northampton Project Team

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Grow Smart Northampton work products available at www.NorthamptonPlanning.org:

- o **Grow Smart Northampton**
- o **Northampton Community Indicators** (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, January 2003).
- o **Northampton Retail Market Analysis** (Karl F. Seidman, December 2003)
- o **King Street Corridor Study** (VHB, December 2003)
- o **Possible Zoning Amendments—Large Scale Residential Development and Open Space Development** (Joel Russel, December 2003)
- o **Possible Zoning Amendments—Large Building Design Standards** (Joel Russel, December 2003)

Executive Summary and Putting it all Together Element

Grow Smart Northampton generates some of the data and tools necessary to support the upcoming city-wide comprehensive plan. **Grow Smart Northampton** is an outgrowth of the City's comprehensive planning process, which began in 1999 with **Vision 2020: Vision and Consistency Analysis**.

In 2004 and 2005, the City will go back to the community for a series of workshops to understand how the community's vision has evolved and how best to implement that vision. With extensive citizen and board participation, **Vision 2020: Vision and Consistency**, **Grow Smart Northampton**, and other existing city plans will be updated and linked together to create a single comprehensive plan. Ultimately, **Vision 2020** will be designed to reflect our community's vision and commitment.

The most important aspect of **Vision 2020** is that Northampton's planning is an on-going process, not a onetime effort. The City will always work with our residents to ensure a future we all can embrace. The table below summarizes the implementation plan to create a city-wide comprehensive plan, and thereby implement this plan.

Current and Planned Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan Elements

Plan Element	Purpose and Status	When
<i>Vision 2020: Vision and Consistency Analysis</i>	Identify community vision. Create a blueprint for the comprehensive plan	1999
<i>Open Space and Recreation and the Environment</i>	To be revised in 2004-2005 and expanded into full environmental element	2000 2005
<i>Consolidated Plan</i>	For support public services and housing elements of comprehensive plan	2000 & 2005
Grow Smart Northampton	Develop the data to support a comprehensive plan	2003
<i>Land Use Plan</i>	Downtown, Florence, State Hospital (1993-1997), Pleasant Street (2001). Other area plans underway.	2005
<i>Housing</i>	Consolidated plan revision will complete housing element	2005
<i>Economic Development</i>	Economic Development Strategy, to be revised into comprehensive plan element	1999 2005
<i>Public Services</i>	Consolidated plan revision will complete public services element	2005
<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	Merge elements into seamless plan	2006

Grow Smart Northampton is designed as part of the data collection phase necessary to support the creation of a comprehensive plan for the city. Some of the data in **Grow Smart Northampton** will soon be out-of-date and will be updated as the comprehensive planning process progresses. Over the coming months the Planning Board and other city boards and agencies will work to update the data, consider some of the preliminary findings, and move forward strategically on specific implementation steps, such as amending zoning and planning a CDBG Action Plan for FY2005, to implement elements of the plan.

Grow Smart Northampton is part of the information gathering and option identification that is necessary to support a comprehensive plan. It is NOT the primary participatory part

of the process. Members of City boards and the public, however, were invited to participate in the planning process (see table below).

Grow Smart Northampton Board and Public Participation

Workshops and Working Sessions	Participants
Planning for <i>Grow Smart Northampton</i> Scope (multiple meetings at different board sessions)	Planning Board, Mayor, Economic Development Coordinator (ED), Office of Planning and Development (OPD)
On-Going <i>Grow Smart</i> Working Sessions	Planning Board with limited public involvement
Economic Development Retail Analysis	Chamber of Commerce, ED, OPD, Retail Focus Group
Land Use and Transportation–King Street Design Charrette	Planning Board, Board of Public Works, Mayor's Office, City Councilors, bicycle advocacy groups, citizens
Housing Working Sessions	Housing Partnership
Open Space and Resource Protection Working Sessions	Conservation Commission
Final <i>Grow Smart Northampton</i> review	Planning Board
Final <i>Grow Smart Northampton</i> review	City Council Industry Committee
Final <i>Grow Smart Northampton</i> review	Mayor's Office
Final <i>Grow Smart Northampton</i> review	Northampton Housing Partnership

Grow Smart and Vision 2020 Next Steps

What	Who	When
Update <i>Grow Smart</i> with revised data as data becomes available	Staff	Spring-Summer 2004
Build analysis sections to <i>Grow Smart Northampton</i>	Staff	Spring-Summer 2004
Plan public forums and outreach for Vision 2020 comp plan	Planning Board	Spring-Summer 2004
Develop more sophisticated environmental suitability analysis and build-out analysis for Northampton reflecting different development and regulatory scenarios	Staff working with boards	Winter-Fall 2004
Hold public forums and outreach for Vision 2020 comp plan	Planning Board	Fall 2004- Spring 2005
Merge Vision 2020 Vision and Consistency, <i>Grow Smart</i> , Downtown and its Gateways and other land use elements into single cohesive plan	Staff	Spring-Fall 2004
Consult with planning process—Housing Partnership, Conservation Commission, City Council Committee on Economic Development, Land Use and Housing	Planning Board and staff	On-going

The **DRAFT: 2020 Land Use –Northampton Vision 2020** map is the land use map for this plan. This map will be modified in the next couple of years based on data collected from the environmental suitability map contained in this plan, the more sophisticated environmental suitability analysis and build-out analysis that the City is working on, and public input during the Vision 2020 comprehensive planning process.

Community Profile

The City of Northampton is situated between the Connecticut River and the foothills of the Berkshires 20 miles north of Springfield. It is bordered by Easthampton on the south, Westhampton on the west, Williamsburg and Hatfield on the north, separated by the Connecticut River from Hadley on the east.

Northampton is 43 miles east of Pittsfield; 93 miles west of Boston; and 151 miles from New York City.



Northampton offers a sophisticated rural lifestyle rich in cultural, artistic, academic, and business resources. Northampton features one of the most vibrant downtown centers in New England and was named "Number One Best Small Arts Town in America" by author John Villani and is recognized as one of the top 25 Arts Destinations in the nation by *AmericanStyle* magazine. It was also named as one of the Dozen Destinations of Distinction by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Residents see Northampton as both traditional and innovative. Several village centers provide focal points for outlying residential areas while the downtown is alive days and evenings with a wide selection of retail, services, restaurants, coffee and ice-cream shops, theaters including the only municipally owned theater in the state, clubs featuring an array of music, street musicians and a Center for the Arts. All of this activity provides a perfect atmosphere for strolling. The city also offers strong municipal programs in education, recreation, public safety and public works. It is known for its energy conservation program and its initiative to improve handicap access to downtown establishments.



The community has a strong and diverse economic base consisting of a mixture of traditional operations (wire protrusion, plastic molding) and innovative ones (production of heat sensing devises) and a large institutional base which includes county services and two hospitals. Northampton is also home to Smith College and is strongly influenced by Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College and the University of Massachusetts as part of the five-college system in the region. The superb quality of life in Northampton contributes to its strong economic base with growing manufacturing, technology and service sectors. The local labor force is diverse, well educated and highly skilled.

The vibrant small city atmosphere of the community is enhanced by rich natural resources, which include the Connecticut River, agricultural and conservation lands and the Acadia Wildlife Sanctuary. Residents believe Northampton has a rich history and are confident that it's future will be built on its diverse population base, solid economy and abundant resources.

(Information from Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and the City of Northampton)

A Vision for the Future Identified in Vision 2020

(In 1999, the City of Northampton, through a series of public workshops, developed the following Vision, which guides the Planning Board and serves as the vision statement for this plan. As part of an eventual Comprehensive Plan, this document will be revisited, and revised as necessary.)

WE, the residents of the City of Northampton, including the villages of Florence, Leeds, and Bay State, want to retain all that makes this place we call home so attractive. We know that our community represents a special union between a slowed-down rural life and a vibrant urban one. We also know that this place could be a more perfect union, a city where differences are more warmly embraced, all are educated well and both natives and newcomers can find a home.

Today, after more than a century, the phrases on our city seal remain helpful directives: caritas (charity,) educatio (education,) and justitia (justice.)

With those larger ideas in mind, we envision a city of distinct places, which are at once separate in geography and connected as part of a larger community. We care about this city precisely because it has what so many other communities' lack: a sense of place. The physical character of our buildings, the beauty of the landscape, and the passion for community we citizens hold dear makes this city livable and worth planning for.

In too many cities and towns across this country, one strip mall looks like any other. No one should mistake this city for another. We aim to keep it that way.

At the commercial center of this city is our vibrant downtown, a place distinct from the smaller villages of Florence center, Leeds or Bay State. Downtown should be treated differently than the villages. We invite commercial enterprises to fill in the nooks and crannies that remain vacant downtown. We also welcome expansion that adds to a walking-friendly, bustling atmosphere that is a region-wide destination spot for shoppers and tourists.

We also realize that by achieving a narrow, albeit necessary, market niche, downtown has lost some dear qualities. Few stores cater to local needs (no one can buy a hammer downtown.) The rental cost of apartments and business space has risen steeply, pushing out those of low and moderate incomes. Some feel that success has stolen our downtown.

While many of us see downtown as a commercial engine, we view our villages as our keepsakes, places to be saved and cherished. Florence center and Leeds remind us that while Northampton is a city, we have town roots. If Florence center grows, it should do so within already existing boundaries. The commercial center should not push into and threaten the bordering residential neighborhoods.

Because we admire village life, where small stores sell to local customers and neighbors frequently see each other walking in town, we look to extend that pattern. As much as possible, we want to avoid sprawling neighborhoods that have no center. We want to encourage small stores to open within and near the entrances to our villages, and there

also we should encourage community and civic centers, where senior citizens and our youth can gather.

We want compact development patterns that are pleasant and safe for pedestrians and bicyclists, while not restricting public choice for a variety of housing and development styles. Compact development provides job opportunities and encourages people to build retail stores and homes close together. That sort of development binds together a neighborhood and reduces automobile use by making public transportation, walking and bicycling more practical.

While, at present, prosperity reigns in our community, work remains. We want to improve the availability and diversity of well-paying jobs for our residents, so many of whom have difficulty finding work that pays enough to raise a family on. Helping to create jobs from different sectors of the economy — technology, the arts, industry, education and service — allows for people of different economic levels to live here.

To allow a more diverse population to live here, we need to increase housing opportunities in every city neighborhood for families of all incomes. We must do this out of a sense of justice, and because democracy and pluralism depends on the creativity inspired by diverse ideas and points of view.

The quality of life in Northampton remains the envy of many. To maintain it, we will ensure that any future housing growth or industrial development, improves, rather than compromises the quality of life. Growth should be at a human scale and sustainable in the long run.

Part of the job of maintaining the quality of life here is recognizing why this city succeeds. While many of the building blocks for success have been here for years, some credit must also go to the legions of artists who have made homes here and who have created a community honoring creativity. The prosperous economy here, in part, reflects the good works of many artists. As a city, let us not take this artist-economy for granted.

Education is one of the foundations of our community, both as an economic force and a moral guidepost. The university and colleges in the area give many of us work, and we desperately believe that our public schools must imbue in our children a love of learning. And yet, education is one of our greatest frustrations. While we push for one of the best public education systems in the state, our financial means restrict us. We are a city of moderate incomes with high educational ambitions. We want to build better schools, provide more teachers and buy more books. Too often, we miss those targets. We want to ensure that youth services go beyond our schools and involve youth in the essential aspects of our community life that applies to them.

Just as we value our children, we realize and respect how much our senior citizens mean to our community. One way we can honor them is to ensure they remain independent, active, and able to contribute to the community for as long as possible. Community centers provide places for seniors and others to gather and share in community life.

Many of us depend on and love our automobiles. At the same time, many of us identify car and truck traffic as the biggest factor eroding our quality of life. Throughout the city, in rich and poor neighborhoods, speeding car and truck traffic frightens us and forces us back into our homes and off the streets. We want our traffic laws obeyed. We also want our city engineered in such a manner that vehicles must slow down while driving through Northampton. More than forcing vehicles to slow down, though, we want this city to become more friendly to those using alternative forms of transportation. We want safe and direct walking paths, lanes that allow bicycle commuting and short cuts that allow people on foot or bicycle to get places directly. We do not see this issue as one of ancillary importance, rather one of paramount concern.

While there is much to celebrate here — our standing as a premier arts community, our villages that retain enduring character and the beauty of the undeveloped countryside — work remains to be done. Let's get to it.

Goals and Objectives Identified in Vision 2020

In 1999, through extensive public workshops, the City of Northampton adopted the following goals and objectives, which still guide the Planning Board and serves as the goal statement for this plan. Additional economic development goals are discussed in the economic development section of this plan. As part of an eventual **Comprehensive Plan**, these goals and objectives will be revisited and revised as necessary. A more detailed analysis, along with identified inconsistencies and recommended actions, is included in **Vision 2020: Vision and Consistency Analysis**, available at www.NorthamptonPlanning.org.

GOAL 1: MAINTAIN VIBRANT URBAN AND VILLAGE CENTERS

- Enhance pedestrian-friendliness of commercial areas.
- Enhance downtown's standing as commercial, civic and cultural center of region.
- Maintain Florence center and satellite commercial areas and villages as local-serving commercial areas.
- Improve commercial buffers of urban and village centers.
- Help locally-based retail stores and services.
- Redevelop former Northampton State Hospital as a vibrant village center.

Policies and objectives
Help create more commercial buildings in village or urban vacant spaces. Make sure no historically or architecturally significant building is lost.
Increase the number of official walking routes downtown and in villages. Make those routes are obvious, direct and interesting, making downtown and the villages walking friendly.
Bring more civic and cultural events to the city.
Convert commercial strips at the edge of downtown so that they look more like the central business district.
Retain and expand traditional village amenities downtown by giving tax breaks and extending zoning privileges.
Make sure that retail commercial growth occurs downtown, Florence center, State Hospital and pedestrian-scale areas. Guide land- and truck-extensive businesses to new Business Park, King Street and industrial areas.
Create a satellite commercial area near Florence Road and Route 66. It should provide local needs as needed (see map). Commercial entrances to Florence, downtown or Leeds should have a village look, not resemble commercial strips.
Lobby state and county politicians to keep government offices downtown.
Minimize losses of historical building downtown. Increase the pedestrian-scale commercial design.
Increase visibility of public road signs. Make sure private signs conform with downtown aesthetic.
Make sure that Florence business district grows within already existing boundaries. No residential or greenspace should be lost to commercial growth.
Provide more public benches, cigarette disposal receptacles, trash cans, telephones, restrooms, and garden spaces downtown and in village centers.
Parks and greenspace should be used to keep urban and village centers attractive for pedestrian traffic, without creating dead spots that impede pedestrian flow.
Encourage redevelopment of Round Housing Parking Lot downtown to create mixed use development while preserving or expanding the number of parking spaces.
Increase landscaping along King Street to make it more appealing.

GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC EXPANSION AND JOB CREATION:

- Expand local economy by creating and retaining jobs.
- Diversify economy.
- Promote and grow local businesses when possible.
- Retain and enhance education, amenities, housing, and character that make city attractive to businesses and customers.
- Ensure development is sustainable over long-term and is low-polluting.

- Ensure economic growth does not interfere with community goals or vision and conforms to Vision 2020.
- Leverage private capital to finance long term investment, create jobs, generate taxes and create marketplace opportunities.
- Provide strong focus on sectors of the local economy where investment is lagging.

Policies and objectives

- | |
|---|
| Increase by 50 percent small businesses in city, with emphasis on small business development, retention of locally-grown businesses, and providing incubator opportunities for new local businesses. |
| Make sure that existing commercial and industrial land parcels are filled in next 20 years, especially old mill buildings, with sensitivity to surrounding residential areas. |
| Increase downtown commercial development by 50 percent, especially those enterprises supplying goods serving local needs and those businesses which bring new export dollars into the community. Best areas to develop are those with good access to parking. |
| Double industrial opportunities in commercial, industrial, and business park areas. |
| Howto city regulatory and non-regulatory objectives to encourage sustainable development friendly to the environment. |
| City economic development efforts should focus on improving job opportunities for all, especially living wage jobs and job opportunities for people who are underserved. |
| Make sure that in developable areas commercial development occurs before housing. |
| Reinvigorate the manufacturing base—support the expansion of existing manufacturers and industry clusters in the City, including traditional and technology manufacturers. |

GOAL 3: ENHANCE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING:

- Preserve vital neighborhoods near downtown, Florence center and throughout the city.
- Maintain high and medium density housing downtown.
- Retain affordable housing and encourage new dispersed affordable housing in every neighborhood.
- Resist gentrification and the income stratification that it brings.
- Allow housing growth to meet demand without creating stress on municipal services or sense of community.
- Encourage common ground between neighborhood groups across the city.
- Help build neighborhood cohesion and self-identity.
- Preserve ability of consumers to have a choice of housing types.

Policies and objectives

- | |
|---|
| Make available low-interest loans for more homeowners to preserve the vitality and density of residential neighborhoods in and around downtown, Florence center and other village centers. |
| Increase the amount of affordable housing, so well above 10 percent of the housing units are affordable. Preserve a range of housing types and costs throughout the city. Including those options in all appropriate areas avoids neighborhood conflicts about certain areas receiving an inappropriately high concentration of any housing type. |
| Allow no commercial development threatening the integrity of residential neighborhoods. |
| Increase the amount of new mixed residential/commercial/industrial development in business and industrial areas when that it will not displace commercial, industrial or artists' space. |
| Limit housing development in city's outlying areas, where it will stress municipal services and alter the character of the community. |
| City should become a participant in linking community groups. |
| Enhance the beauty of neighborhoods and the livability of them. |
| Encourage the growth of neighborhood projects and organizations. |

GOAL 4: IMPROVE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION, PARKING AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

- Ensure clear flow of people, goods, services and information (roads, paths, computer networks).
- Change traffic circulation systems to allow for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Encourage more mass transit that people will use.
- Improve accessibility and affordability of parking without adding parking that detracts from pedestrian scale.
- Require compact development patterns that encourage walking and biking.
- Reduce traffic congestion downtown, near Coolidge Bridge, on King Street and on Damon Road.

Policies and objectives
Business development should generally be encouraged build in the urban core and redeveloped areas that are most suited to providing pedestrian, bicycle traffic, or transit access.
Create multi-modal transportation system with the pedestrian and bicycle circulation and and alternative transportation systems that allow residents to find alternatives to automobiles for many of their trips.
Do a citywide analysis of existing major intersections and traffic flow throughout the city. Determine how intersections enhance or harm the character of the community, not just the immediate intersection area. Evaluate these tradeoffs.
Buy new land to expand public parking off Main Street, downtown, without creating dead areas in pedestrian traffic flow. Meet parking demands by building new lots, using existing lots more intensely, encouraging non-car transportation alternatives, and using walking routes to shorten walking distances so that existing parking can serve new needs.
Retain the tradition of free parking in Florence center.
Encourage commercial development in areas with access to public or private parking, especially on the edge of downtown, while preserving downtown's pedestrian nature.
Increase by 10 percent the density of housing in and within walking distance of downtown. Encourage new downtown mixed residential development to minimize the need for driving downtown.
The final comprehensive plan needs an overview of existing traffic patterns.
Use the [Transportation and Parking Commission] to help coordinate non-motor vehicle transportation improvements.
Make sure downtown is pedestrian friendly, and explore possibility of re-routing some of Route 9 traffic from Main Street to Damon Road and Bridge Road, if that can be done without harming neighborhoods.

GOAL 5: CALM TRAFFIC TO PRESERVE NEIGHBORHOODS AND VILLAGES

- Slow automobile traffic to retain safe, livable, child-friendly neighborhoods.
- Slow automobile traffic to retain pedestrian-friendly villages and urban centers.

Policies and objectives
Enforcement regulations to calm traffic.
Educate citizens to calm traffic.
Engineer roads to calm traffic and reduce speeds. Engineer traffic calming in whenever roads are reconstructed and for high priority retrofits to improve traffic safety, retain pedestrian-scale and child-friendly neighborhoods and streets, improve safety of pedestrian crosswalks and intersections.
Create safe roads committee to consider multi-department effort at calming traffic.
Minimize pedestrian "dead-spaces" at intersections, crosswalks and parking lots.

GOAL 6: EXPAND OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

- Preserve and expand city holdings of open space, wild lands and small pieces of open land in developed areas.
- Use open space and recreation to ensure that the urban and village centers are attractive places to live, work and visit.
- Make more natural areas available for public use.
- Provide recreation opportunities for individuals of all ages and physical abilities now and for future generations.
- Preserve the character of rural areas, farms, forests, and rivers

Policies and objectives

- Make sure all appropriate recreation areas are accessible to those with physical disabilities.
- Upgrade all parks in urban and developed areas.
- Increase the number of ball fields by at least 10 to serve burgeoning recreation needs.
- Link all the city's conservation districts to each other with greenways so that hikers and walkers can traverse the city. Create a citywide trail system that is marked.
- Add to the city's conservation land holdings by acquiring small green areas downtown and in villages of Bay State, Leeds and Florence.
- Provide recreation, conservation and open space opportunities.
- Acquire land with vistas and interesting landscapes, especially in western edge of city.
- Make sure that no city farm goes out of business. Farm land should not be lost to housing.
- Acquire land that serves as gateway between urban, suburban or rural landscapes.

GOAL 7: PRESERVE TRADITIONAL LAND USE PATTERNS WITHOUT CREATING SPRAWL

- Redevelop vacant land in built-up areas, guarding against sprawl.
- Promote new villages (commercial, residential areas) where feasible.
- Foster continued mixture of uses in villages: Florence, Leeds, Bay State.
- Discourage development damaging village character of urban/residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure new downtown development meshes with architectural heritage.
- Maintain clear distinction between rural, suburban and urban areas.
- Promote traditional neighborhood development patterns.

Policies and objectives

- New development should be accompanied by open space preservation so that at least one acre of open space is preserved for each acre of land developed.
- Suburban style development should be matched by an equal or greater amount of compact development.
- Ensure that new housing development will not outstrip school, public works, public safety services, and ability of downtown roads to handle suburban traffic.
- Implement detailed 2020 Land Use Plan (early draft attached)
- Build satellite commercial areas/community centers to create sense of place in less urban areas.
- Create land zoned for new economic development opportunities where it will not harm neighborhoods.
- Encourage development patterns that contribute to, and do not sap, the strength of their neighborhoods.
- Make sure that all existing buildings are reused and rehabilitated.
- Cluster all housing developments in rural areas, leaving more open land, with designs that still allow for housing choices.
- Protect historic buildings defining visual character of downtown.

GOAL 8: ENHANCE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

- Allow for more public gathering spots.
- Ensure public buildings accessible to physically disabled.
- Plan for more community centers.
- Build community by improving communication between groups.
- Better involve public in planning and city government.
- Improve climate of tolerance for differences.
- Build the sense of connectivity between people and their neighborhoods.

Policies and objectives
Integrate social services and affordable housing programs with neighborhood concerns. City broker dialogue between social service agencies and neighborhoods.
Improve education and recreation for all age groups, including multigenerational activities.
Provide more programs for young people and involve youth in decision making.
Increase cooperation and collaboration among social service agencies.
Improve sense of neighborhood identity.
Open schools and municipal buildings for public gathering.
Preserve existing entertainment and recreation complexes without harming neighborhoods.

GOAL 9: PRESERVE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Protect important ecological resources, including surface and groundwater resources, plant communities and wildlife habitat.
- City should take lead in protecting architectural and cultural history.
- Preserve ecological and wildlife linkages, especially water-based linkages.

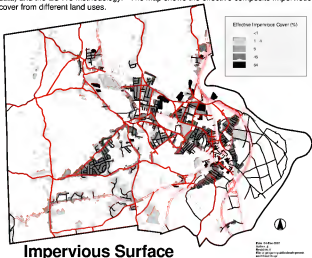
Policies and objectives
Improve quality of storm water discharges
Discourage development in environmentally sensitive areas and encourage environmentally sound development.
Protect valuable ecological resources
Reuse brownfields sites
Provide performance standards to preserve the environment
Preserve cultural and architectural history
Maintain clean sidewalks and parks and encourage individuals to clean after themselves and pets.
New acquisitions to city vehicle fleet should include alternative fuel vehicles.
Provide for quality street trees and streetscape
Provide parking spaces and refueling places for electric vehicles.
Reduce city dependence on disposable items.

Open Space and Resource Protection Element

(The Northampton Open Space and Recreation Plan 2000-2004 and Vision 2020: Vision and Consistency Analysis were approved by the Commonwealth as equivalent open space and resource protection plan elements under EO418. Equivalent Plan Items: 1) GIS-based land suitability map showing location, type, and quantity of open space and land suitable for development and protected properties and water resources. (Vision 2020, Pages 18 and 50, Open Space Plan page 113); and 2) Detailed findings and recommendations related to open space, environmental and resource protection (Vision 2020, Pages 1-20, Open Space Plan, Pages 48-59). This element was designed to fill in gaps that the Planning Board, and to a lesser extent, the Conservation Commission, have identified in our existing knowledge base and understanding of options.)

Water Quality Analysis

The **Water Quality Map** shows theoretical water quality impacts from current Northampton land uses. Land uses were derived from the Massachusetts land use analysis (MassGIS data) and the EO418 methodology. The map shows the effective composite impervious cover from different land uses.



Impervious Surface

The Northampton Department of Public Works is currently preparing a stormwater plan consistent with EPA requirements to comply with a stormwater National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. As this information is prepared, the water

quality analysis will be updated. Implementation of the DPW Stormwater plan and other potential public policies can help Northampton address the following water quality needs:

- The City's stormwater system needs to be updated so that water quality provisions are included at initial points of entry into the system (e.g. catch basins) and at discharge points (e.g. artificial wetlands between the discharge point and receiving waters).
- Private development must remove total suspended solids (TSS) and other contaminants before stormwater enters the stormwater systems or receiving waters.
- Public and private systems must be maintained to reduce initial contamination and to ensure proper operation.

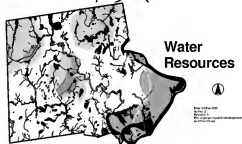
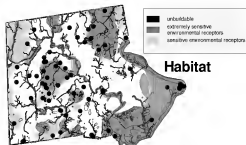
Environmental Land Suitability

The Habitat, Open Space and Scenic, and Water Resources maps, and the resulting composite Environmental Land Suitability map, show environmental limitations that do or, depending on the City's regulatory policies, could limit development. The City plans to revise these maps in the near future to reflect:

- Environmental information that will soon be compiled.
- The unique value of undisturbed resources in pristine areas.
- City goals for infill and development in urbanized areas, existing commercial/industrial areas, and in areas identified for new growth.

Environmental Land Suitability Legend

	Unbuildable				
	Extremely Sensitive Environmental Receptors				
	Sensitive Environmental Receptors				
	Limited (or unknown) Environmental Receptors				
Resource Areas	Within Resource	Resource Buffer 50'	100'	150'	200'
Wetlands (only known wetlands are shown)					
Rivers (only major rivers are shown)					
Streams (many streams should be listed as rivers)					
Lakes/Ponds					
Certified Vernal Pools					
Potential Vernal Pools					
Floodplain (as mapped by FEMA)					
Protected Open Space, Conservation and Parks					
Very Scenic (As identified by the state)					
Bio-Core (As identified by the state)					
Est. Habitat (As identified by the state)					
Potential Habitat (As identified by the state)					
Priority Habitat (As identified by the state)					
Aquifer Zone 1 (Buffer around well)					
Aquifer Zone 2 (Primary recharge area of well)					
Aquifer Zone 3 (Additional watershed of well)					



The Environmental Suitability Map created for this plan will inform an effort to:

- Map environmental limitations in more detail.
- More accurately determine limits to growth.
- Conduct a more sophisticated buildout analysis.
- Model different regulatory and public policy actions.
- Protect the most sensitive environmental receptors.
- Encourage development consistent with
 - **Vision 2020: Vision and Consistency Analysis** and other current plans.
 - The upcoming **Comprehensive Planning** process.



Environmental Suitability


 Date: 10/10/2011
 Author: J. [illegible]
 Title: Environmental Suitability Map

Water Budget Analysis

All water supply areas (emergency reservoirs' watershed in Northampton, primary reservoir watersheds in Hatfield, Whately, Conway, and Williamsburg, aquifer in Northampton) are zoned with some type of water supply protection zoning.

The total safe yields from all of Northampton's water supplies exceed demand and expected demand for the foreseeable future. In addition, the City has acquired a large watershed to hold in reserve as a future reservoir or well site should additional water supply development be needed at some point in the distant future. With a flat population and increasing conservation measures (especially focused on leak detection within the city's water system), the Northampton Department of Public Works is not expecting a significant change in water usage for the medium term future. The water system could, however, accommodate some increases in demand.

Water Budget Analysis

Safe Yield Spring Street Municipal Well	1.0 million gallons per day
Safe Yield Clark Street Municipal Well	1.0 million gallons per day
Safe Yield Primary Reservoir System (2 reservoirs)	4.2 million gallons per day
Roberts Meadow Reservoir System (2 reservoirs)	Emergency water use only, no safe yield calculated
Water Mill River watershed lands	Land owned for future supply, no yield without development
Total Safe Yield	6.2 million gallons per day (on sustained basis)
Current Permit for Authorized Withdrawals	4.77 million gallons per day (on sustained basis)
Average Daily Water Usage (2002)	3.37 million gallons per day
Maximum Daily Water Usage (2002)	4.83 million gallons per day
Projected increase (decrease)—medium term	Water increases roughly balance improved water conservation in the system

Source: Northampton Dept. of Public Works, Paulette Kuzdeba, Senior Environmental Planner

Smart Growth and Urbanism/New Urbanism

Northampton has had increasing discussions about how to promote healthy urban centers that contribute to the quality of life of the residents of those centers. The Planning Board and a many of the participants in Vision 2020 embrace the concept of urban centers similar to that defined by the Congress for the New Urbanism (1998). The concept is a combination of neighborhood design elements, including:

1. Compact, walkable neighborhoods with clearly defined edges;
2. Clearly defined centers with public space, public buildings, a transit stop, and retail businesses;
3. An interconnected street network, forming coherent blocks and lined with building fronts rather than parking lots;
4. A diverse mix of activities and housing options;
5. Civic spaces in prominent places; and
6. Open spaces in convenient locations throughout the neighborhoods.

Northampton has three significant commercial centers. Two of them, downtown Northampton, including the Pleasant Street, and Florence, clearly have these defining elements. The third, King Street, contains more of these elements than most strip commercial areas, but as it currently is, does not meet this definition.

Northampton Smart Growth Zoning and Regulatory Options

Northampton has already adopted many models of smart growth that other communities are only beginning to discuss. Among these are measures and standards that encourage:

1. Densities necessary to support pedestrian activities and transit services in commercial areas.
2. Evolution from one use to another in existing buildings in urban core areas.
3. Housing above commercial space in commercial areas.
4. Shared parking in all areas, especially in the downtown.
5. Payment in-lieu of providing parking (with a relatively small payment)
6. Parking that does not dominate the landscape.
7. Attractive designs in commercial buildings
8. Cluster development
9. Affordable housing inclusionary provisions
10. Infill commercial and residential projects.

During the development of this plan, the Planning Board, and to a lesser extent the Housing Partnership, the Conservation Commission, and the City Council Ordinance Committee, had extensive discussions on options to encourage smart growth within the City. The goal of this plan is not to create detailed recommendations, but to identify the options that the Planning Board has discussed. No decision has been made on which options to pursue. A full community discussion is critical before any decisions are made.

1. **Improve the quality of residential subdivision development and preserve sensitive lands and valuable open space.** As a result of City policies and incentives, most new residential subdivisions are open space residential developments (cluster). While "cluster" development has preserved hundreds of acres of open space and created more walkable neighborhoods, there are opportunities and the need for improvements to create smart growth patterns. As part of this study, the Planning Board requested an analysis of how the ordinance could be improved. A draft of one possible zoning approach, written by Joel Russel, a planning consultant, is available at www.NorthamptonPlanning.org. The draft:
 - a. Improves the incentives for developers to use open space residential development when developing residential properties.
 - b. Improves the quality of open space residential development and planned unit developments (PUDs).

In addition, the City could consider revising the City's Wetlands Protection Ordinance to ensure the ordinance preserves the most important wetlands habitat in the city, especially those associated with vernal pools.

2. **Preserve especially sensitive lands and valuable open space from development that would damage these resources.** The City has the opportunity to encourage the transfer of development rights (TDR) from sensitive land that should be preserved as open space to land that is more appropriate for development. Northampton has an existing TDR program on the books, in areas zoned Farms Forests and Rivers (FFR), but it is in such limited areas that no TDR will ever be used. Northampton could use TDRs more extensively by:

- a. Making sensitive ecological resources and rural areas (for example, areas shown in **Vision 2020: Vision** as future FFR) "sending zones" where, in return for property owners permanently preserving those areas, development rights could be transferred out and used elsewhere.
 - b. Making existing urban areas and areas desirable for future development (areas zoned commercial, industrial, urban residential or planned village) "receiving zones" where development rights could be transferred into, from the sending zones, to allow additional density. It would be critical, however, to ensure that any extra density allowed is consistent with the City's goals and to ensure that the character of "receiving" zones would be preserved.
3. **Encourage development in urban areas that will contribute to the walkability of the city and maintenance of density in the urban core.** Over the past ten years, the City has made numerous zoning changes to increase allowable density of dwelling units in urban areas, which has resulted in significant infill and infill opportunities. This infill has been in keeping with the existing pedestrian-scale character of the areas where it has occurred. Given the drop in average family size, and the conversion of some multifamily units into single family homes, however, density (persons per square mile) continues to drop in urban neighborhoods. There are additional infill opportunities that can help maintain vibrant neighborhoods, provide room for growth that doesn't consume open space and minimize future traffic impacts:
 - a. To allow more commercial, industrial and institutional uses and denser commercial uses, through increasing the maximum heights in some commercial districts and for college structures and making small expansions of existing commercial zoning districts.
 - b. The TDR discussed above could be used to allow additional residential units that will contribute to the walkability of the City.
 - c. Certain areas could be rezoned to denser zoning districts and/or dimensional requirements can be reduced.
 - d. Require pedestrian and vehicle connections between existing neighborhoods and new development.
 - e. Adopt an adequate facilities ordinance to ensure that development not occur until infrastructure is provided which is adequate to support that development and desired densities.
4. **Encourage development patterns and appearances that contribute to the vitality and desirability of the City.** Through a combination of actions, Northampton has helped preserve and create attractive development. Committed businesses, institutional, and residential property owners, city investment, and city regulations (zoning, historic districts, and architectural design) have all helped make this happen. Additional regulatory options include:
 - a. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance to require a waiting or due diligence period for demolition of historic buildings.
 - b. Create design standards to cover all uses, buildings, and developments over 10,000 square feet (currently such standards apply only to retail projects). As

part of *Grow Smart Northampton*, the Planning Board requested an analysis of how the city's large building design standards could be improved. A draft of possible zoning changes is available at www.NorthamptonPlanning.org.

King Street Planning

The Planning Board identified the need to focus planning on King Street for this study. Downtown, the Village at Hospital Hill and Pleasant Street are models of smart growth or are moving in that direction and existing public and private investment, planning and regulatory efforts are improving those areas every day.

King Street is one of the critical economic engines that keeps Northampton healthy, but it has not been as carefully planned. Planning King Street is critical to enhance its role as an economic engine, while improving how it functions. A planning effort with extensive City Council, Planning Board, Mayor's Office, and public involvement has already resulted in a series of zoning changes and several public forums focusing on private land uses.

The Planning Board and the City are working on additional King Street planning efforts:

1. A land use plan of King Street is currently underway. It will examine:
 - a. The appropriate vision and zoning for the area from the edge of the Central Business District to the strip commercial area that begins at Stop and Shop.
 - b. The appropriate vision and zoning for the area adjacent to Hatfield Street.
2. City Council committed to continually reexamine and tweak recently passed zoning as the City better understands how the market reacts to these ordinances and as a result of economic niche analysis (see economic development section of this plan).
3. Newly visualization tools are being used to allow the public to understand the consequences of development options. As part of this plan, an electronic three-dimensional model of King Street was created and integrated into the Northampton Geographic Information System (Community Viz/ArcGIS flight files). This allows users to understand existing development patterns and model potential changes in a way that is easily understandable to the public and decision makers.

At the start of the *Smart Growth Northampton* planning process, the Planning Board and several City Councillors sponsored a design workshop on the future of King Street. That workshop helped define the work program for this planning process.

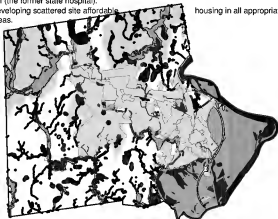
As part of *Smart Growth Northampton*, the City commissioned a consultant team to hold a design workshop on King Street. The consultant team consisted of a transportation planner with expertise in bicycle and pedestrian accommodation, a traffic engineer with expertise in signal systems, a highway designer and a landscape architect. The workshop focused on the public right-of-way and possible improvements. It drew representatives of the Planning Board, the Office of Planning and Development, City Councillors, the Mayor's Office, the Board of Public Works, bicycle advocacy groups and members of the public. The workshop was held to identify possible options, not to reach a consensus on a solution. This workshop also informed a King Street Corridor Study, developed under the transportation component of *Grow Smart Northampton*.

Housing Element

(The Community Development Block Grant Program, Consolidated Plan & Annual Action Plan (May 2000), Northampton's Housing Inventory Gap Assessment (March 2000) and the Vision 2020: Vision and Consistency Analysis were approved by the Commonwealth as equivalent Housing plan elements under EO418. Equivalent Plan items, Consolidated Plan's partial housing inventory (Pages 9-41) and Housing Inventory Gap (entire document) discuss financial constraints, and Consolidated Plan (Pages 42-58) and Vision 2020 (Pages 10-11) discuss housing goals and objectives. This element fills in some of the gaps that the Housing Partnership and the Planning Board identified in our knowledge base and understanding. The analysis is adapted from Mass. Housing Partnership's Housing Needs Workbook, Assessing Community Housing Needs May 2003.)

The **Housing Suitability Map** shows areas suitable for additional housing (hatched areas without environmental limitations). Northampton is committed to:

- Preserving all existing affordable housing. Northampton has large affordable housing projects and large numbers of other affordable units scattered around the community.
- Developing approximately 120 new units of affordable housing at the Village at Hospital Hill (the former state hospital).
- Developing scattered site affordable housing in all appropriate areas.



Potential Housing Suitability

HOUSING INVENTORY

Rental Housing

How much rental housing already exists? The 2000 Census indicates that there are 12,405 total units; 11,890 of which are occupied. Of that universe, 5,525 are rental units, 46% of the total. The report states that 9,895 people comprise the rental population, with an average household size of 1.79. (Census Table H7 "Tenure")

Statewide, 38.3 % of all housing in Massachusetts was renter occupied (35% for communities other than Boston).

How much of Northampton's rental housing is subsidized?

The inventory of subsidized housing compiled by the MA. Department of Housing and Community Development indicates a total of 12,282 year round housing units, 1,393 of which are considered Chapter 40B units, or 11.34% of the total inventory.

(www.state.ma.us/dhcd/components/hac/HslnvRev.pdf)

What kind of housing is rented? A breakdown of unit type and associated resident population is located in the table below.

Rental Unit Type and Population

Unit Type	Total Units	Total Residents
Single Family Detached	564	1,258
Single Family Attached	168	370
Two Family	939	1,802
Three or Four Family	1,231	2,032
Five to Nine Units	1,079	1,819
Ten to Nineteen Units	623	894
Twenty to Forty Nine Units	416	578
Fifty or More Units	496	562
Mobile Homes	9	16

Census table H32 "Tenure by Units in Structure"

For comparison, in 2000, 9.6% of all rental housing in Massachusetts was located in single family homes. In Northampton, it is 13%. (564 + 168 = 732 divided by 5,525 = 13%)

Age of Northampton Rental Housing Stock

Renter Occupied	Total	5,525
Year Built: 1999 to March 2000	8	
1995 to 1998	20	
1990 to 1994	79	
1980 to 1989	392	
1970 to 1979	825	
1960 to 1969	645	
1950 to 1959	578	
1940 to 1949	551	
1939 or earlier	2,427	

US 2000 Census: Census Table H36 "Tenure by Year Structure Built"

Age of Massachusetts Rental Housing Stock

1990-3/2000	1980-1989	1970-1979	1960-1969	1950-1959	Pre-1950
4%	9%	15%	12%	11%	49%

Profile of Renters and Rental Demand

The Census table indicating household income in 1999 by gross rent as a percentage of income is shown below. A local supply of rental units available at a variety of rental rates allows for choice within the housing market. This table shows the percentage of renters who are paying more than 30% of their income for rent. 30-45% of gross income is considered the maximum reasonable expenditure for housing costs.

Rent as % of Gross Income

Gross Rent as % of Household income in 1999
for the City of Northampton.

Total:	5,518
Less than \$10,000:	1,027
Less than 20 percent	30
20 to 24 percent	92
25 to 29 percent	182
30 to 34 percent	64
35 percent or more	548
Not computed	111
\$10,000 to \$19,999:	916
Less than 20 percent	119
20 to 24 percent	55
25 to 29 percent	62
30 to 34 percent	84
35 percent or more	532
Not computed	64
\$20,000 to \$34,999:	1,352
Less than 20 percent	260
20 to 24 percent	198
25 to 29 percent	360
30 to 34 percent	121
35 percent or more	365
Not computed	48
\$35,000 to \$49,999:	944
Less than 20 percent	344
20 to 24 percent	303
25 to 29 percent	198
30 to 34 percent	50
35 percent or more	41
Not computed	8
\$50,000 to \$74,999:	905
Less than 20 percent	702
20 to 24 percent	123
25 to 29 percent	35
30 to 34 percent	13
35 percent or more	0

Not computed	32
\$75,000 to \$99,999:	218
Less than 20 percent	205
20 to 24 percent	0
25 to 29 percent	7
30 to 34 percent	0
35 percent or more	0
Not computed	6
\$100,000 or more:	156
Less than 20 percent	148
20 to 24 percent	0
25 to 29 percent	0
30 to 35 % +	0
Not computed	8

In summary, of 3,072 (3,295 – those not computed) Northampton renters earning less than \$35,000 = 1,714 or 56% paid at least 30% of their gross income for rent and utilities. 1,445 of the 3,072 or 47% of those households paid 35% or more for housing costs.

For comparison, in 2000, 36.4% of Massachusetts' renters and 58.5% of all renters earning less than \$35,000 paid at least 30% of their gross household income for rent and utilities.

Another 2000 Census chart indicates a figure of 1,818 households paying more than 30% of their income for gross rent, 33% of the total.

Gross Rent as a % of Household Income For Northampton

Gross Rent % of Household Income/ Renter Occupied units	Northampton
Total:	5,518
Less than 10 percent	241
10 to 14 percent	648
15 to 19 percent	919
20 to 24 percent	771
25 to 29 percent	844
30 to 34 percent	332
35 to 39 percent	273
40 to 49 percent	403
50 percent or more	810
Not computed	277

Census Table H69 "Tenure Gross Rent % of Household Income"

How much do renters pay? The census information is provided below; however, getting accurate rental rate information in Northampton is difficult. Due to the high number of rental units located in one and two unit structures, landlords, particularly owner occupants have been reluctant in past survey efforts to reveal such information.

Gross Rents of Occupied Units in Northampton

Northampton Median Gross Rent	\$847
Total number of units:	5,518 units
With cash rent:	5,320 units
Less than \$100	41 units
\$100 to \$149	90 units
\$150 to \$199	349 units
\$200 to \$249	158 units
\$250 to \$299	160 units
\$300 to \$349	222 units
\$350 to \$399	130 units
\$400 to \$449	200 units
\$450 to \$499	234 units
\$500 to \$549	290 units
\$550 to \$599	386 units
\$600 to \$649	428 units
\$650 to \$699	457 units
\$700 to \$749	397 units
\$750 to \$799	446 units
\$800 to \$899	523 units
\$900 to \$999	355 units
\$1,000 to \$1,249	318 units
\$1,250 to \$1,499	113 units
\$1,500 to \$1,999	23 units
\$2,000 or more	0 units
No cash rent	198 units

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Table H62 "Gross Rent"
Census Table H63 "Median Gross Rent (dollars)"

Northampton Gross Rent by Bedroom

Total:	5,518
No bedroom:	285
With cash rent:	285
Less than \$200	42
\$200 to \$299	52
\$300 to \$499	131
\$500 to \$749	51
\$750 to \$999	9
\$1,000 or more	0
No cash rent	0
1 bedroom:	2,188
With cash rent:	2,134
Less than \$200	326
\$200 to \$299	204
\$300 to \$499	373
\$500 to \$749	1,005
\$750 to \$999	181
\$1,000 or more	45
No cash rent	54

2 bedrooms:	2,121
With cash rent:	2,063
Less than \$200	92
\$200 to \$299	43
\$300 to \$499	143
\$500 to \$749	770
\$750 to \$999	848
\$1,000 or more	167
No cash rent	58
3 or more bedrooms:	924
With cash rent:	838
Less than \$200	20
\$200 to \$299	19
\$300 to \$499	139
\$500 to \$749	132
\$750 to \$999	286
\$1,000 or more	242
No cash rent	86

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Table H67 "Bedrooms by Gross Rent"

For comparison, the median gross rent in Massachusetts in 2000 was \$684/month, with the following median rents:

Median Rent by Bedroom Size

Studio	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3+ bedrooms
\$567	\$578	\$745	\$760

Current market rents are typically significantly higher than the census data, due to price escalation over time and the fact that census rents also include subsidized rentals. (*According to the MHP Housing Needs Assessment Workbook, pg. 6.)

What is the distribution of renter household size?

Household Size

Total	1990	2000
Renter occupied:	5,501	5,525
1-person household	2,509	2,944
2-person household	1,751	1,611
3-person household	616	606
4-person household	335	250
5-person household	139	79
6-person household	79	17
7-or-more-person household	72	18

Census Table H17 "Tenure by Household Size"

This chart indicates the mix of bedrooms in rental units, indicating a range of housing options for different sized households.

Distribution of Units By Number of Bedrooms

Total:	Northampton
Renter occupied:	5,525
No bedroom	285
1 bedroom	2,188
2 bedrooms	2,128
3 bedrooms	674
4 bedrooms	179
5 or more bedrooms	71

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Table H42 "Tenure by Bedrooms"

The following chart shows how much turnover occurs in the rental inventory. A low turnover rate would indicate that the market could support additional rental housing in the community.

How long have Northampton renters lived at their current address

Renter occupied:	5,525
Moved in 1999 to March 2000	1,898
Moved in 1995 to 1998	2,166
Moved in 1990 to 1994	716
Moved in 1980 to 1989	519
Moved in 1970 to 1979	80
Moved in 1969 or earlier	146

Census Table H38 "Tenure by Year Householder Moved Into Unit"

For comparison, in Massachusetts, 29.5% of renters had moved in the past year. In Northampton, 34% of all renters moved in 1999-2000.

How old are Northampton renters?

Makeup of Renter Population By Age

Renter occupied:	5,525
Householder 15 to 24 years	531
Householder 25 to 34 years	1,685
Householder 35 to 44 years	1,253
Householder 45 to 54 years	882
Householder 55 to 59 years	227
Householder 60 to 64 years	151
Householder 65 to 74 years	267
Householder 75 to 84 years	356
Householder 85 years and over	173

Census H14 "Tenure by Age of Householder"

In Northampton, 14% of the rental units are occupied by householders 65 and over.

In Massachusetts, 19% of all rental housing is rented by householders 65 and over. Statewide 31.8% of all householders 65 and over live in rental housing.

Indicators of Need

What is the rental vacancy rate?

The following table provides a figure for the total number of vacant units in April 2000, the date the census was collected. The suggested formula for calculating the "Rental Vacancy Rate," is to add the "Vacant for Rent" figure Census Table H8 to Occupied Rental Units Census Table H7, then divide the Vacant for Rent Units by the total Occupied and Vacant for Rent Units.

Northampton Vacant Units

Total:	525
For rent	208
For sale only	54
Rented or sold, not occupied	69
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	135
For migrant workers	0
Other vacant	59

Renter and Owner Occupied Units

	Northampton
Total:	11,880
Owner occupied	6,355
Renter occupied	5,525

Census Table H7 "Tenure"

Based on the formula above, Northampton's vacancy rate would be 3.6%. Most advocates and housing providers, however, would allege that number to be much lower.

For comparison, in 2000 the overall vacancy rate in Massachusetts was 3.7%. A vacancy rate below 5% is an indicator that renters are experiencing limited choices and increasing costs and points to the need for additional units.

How long is the local waiting list for existing subsidized housing?

There are 324 families on the Section 8 waiting list (as of November 2003) at the Northampton Housing Authority. These numbers are 2 years old, as the list has not been opened for new applicants since 2001.

Waiting List Requests

One bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms
91	136	87	10

Public Housing (Florence Heights, Hampshire Heights and 705's)

	1 bdrm.	2 bdms.	3 bdms.	4 bdms.	Total
State/Federal (combined list)	8	37	16	5	66

Only households with completed applications are placed on the waiting list. There are approximately 100 additional applications pending with incomplete submissions. There are also 20 units off line at Hampshire Heights, undergoing kitchen and bathroom renovations.

Information gathered from Housing Search workers at the Hampshire Community Action Commission yields a need for affordable, subsidized 2 and 3 bedroom units. Families with low and moderate incomes cannot afford market rate units.

HCAC's Housing Services Program began tracking placement of the DTA referred families they work with in 2002.

TOWN OF ORIGIN

Town	County	#	%
Amherst	Hampshire	26	24%
Belchertown	Hampshire	4	4%
Cummington	Hampshire	1	1%
Easthampton	Hampshire	21	19%
Hatfield	Hampshire	3	3%
Holyoke	Hampshire	1	1%
Leeds	Hampshire	3	3%
Northampton	Hampshire	37	34%
Florence	Hampshire	8	7%
South Hadley	Hampshire	2	2%
West Hatfield	Hampshire	1	1%
Williamsburg	Hampshire	2	2%
Southampton	Hampshire	1	1%
		110	

PLACEMENT

Town	County	#	%
Greenfield	Franklin	5	5%
South Deerfield	Franklin	1	1%
Sunderland	Franklin	2	2%
Turners Falls	Franklin	1	1%
Subtotal	Franklin	9	9%
Chicopee	Hampden	2	2%
East Otis	Hampden	1	1%
Holyoke	Hampden	6	6%
Palmer	Hampden	1	1%
West Springfield	Hampden	4	4%
Westfield	Hampden	2	2%
Springfield	Hampden	4	4%
Subtotal	Hampden	22	22%
Amherst	Hampshire	16	16%
Belchertown	Hampshire	4	4%
Chesterfield	Hampshire	1	1%
Cummington	Hampshire	1	1%
Easthampton	Hampshire	10	10%
Hadley	Hampshire	1	1%
Hatfield	Hampshire	1	1%
Leeds	Hampshire	3	3%

Northampton	Hampshire	14	14%
Florence	Hampshire	2	2%
South Hadley	Hampshire	3	3%
Ware	Hampshire	2	2%
West Hatfield	Hampshire	2	2%
Williamsburg	Hampshire	1	1%
Subtotal	Hampshire	63	64%
	Out of area	5	5%
	Total	99	
	Not reported	11	

This data indicates that a low percentage of families find housing in the Northampton area and it is reported that when the few Section 8 vouchers that are still circulating are used, those numbers will drop significantly, as no new vouchers are being issued.

Currently, obstacles include the lack of Section 8 vouchers for use by clients. The Northampton Housing Authority can re-issue a voucher if one gets "turned in", but no new ones are being issued. The data on housing placement being kept by HCAC indicating success in finding housing for families, will significantly drop from this point forward, as the Section 8 freeze takes hold.

How many renters pay in excess of their income for rent? Census table H71 "Age of Householder by Gross Rent as % of Household Income in 1999"

Northampton	
Total:	5,518
Householder 15 to 24 years:	531
Less than 20 percent	112
20 to 24 percent	69
25 to 29 percent	64
30 to 34 percent	6
35 percent or more	253
Not computed	27
Householder 25 to 34 years:	1,678
Less than 20 percent	609
20 to 24 percent	281
25 to 29 percent	252
30 to 34 percent	62
35 percent or more	443
Not computed	31
Householder 35 to 44 years:	1,253
Less than 20 percent	524
20 to 24 percent	189
25 to 29 percent	147
30 to 34 percent	89
35 percent or more	290
Not computed	14
Householder 45 to 54 years:	882
Less than 20 percent	315
20 to 24 percent	82

25 to 29 percent	167
30 to 34 percent	44
35 percent or more	223
Not computed	51
Householder 55 to 64 years:	378
Less than 20 percent	116
20 to 24 percent	47
25 to 29 percent	71
30 to 34 percent	50
35 percent or more	60
Not computed	34
Householder 65 to 74 years:	267
Less than 20 percent	49
20 to 24 percent	15
25 to 29 percent	59
30 to 34 percent	39
35 percent or more	66
Not computed	39
Householder 75 years and over:	529
Less than 20 percent	83
20 to 24 percent	88
25 to 29 percent	84
30 to 34 percent	42
35 percent or more	151
Not computed	81

When compared to H73, which shows the rent burden related to household income, it is possible to estimate the number of households that would be income-eligible for subsidized, were it available.

For comparison, 36.3% of all renter households in Massachusetts paid 30% or more of gross household income for rent in 2000. This included 44.4% of renters over 65 years old and 34% of renters under 65.

What is the relationship of rent to local wages?

Department of Employment and Training data indicates the average wage earned by all workers and by typical jobs in the area. A formula is suggested for determining the following:

What could a typical worker (teacher, nurse, retail clerk) in Northampton afford to pay for rent?

How much would they have to earn to afford the median rent?

Formula:

divide an average annual wage by 12= average monthly income

multiply that monthly income x .30 (30%) = max. affordable rent

look at current rental rates and compute how much a worker would have to earn to rent the median priced units

The median income for a family of 4 in Northampton is \$41,808
(Census Table DP-3. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000)

\$41,808 divided by 12= \$3,484 (monthly income)

\$3,484 x 30% = \$1,045 (amount available for monthly housing costs)

\$1,045 - \$300 = \$745 (monthly amount for rent after utility costs/ estimate)

\$745 is an affordable rent amount for a family of 4 earning the median income.

Assuming a family of 4 requires at least a 2 bedroom unit, few of the options listed below would be considered affordable for a family of that size.

***Sampling of Current Market Rate Rental Rents**

1.) Hampton Court 1 bdm. (586 sq.ft.) = \$ 900+

2 bdm. (906 sq.ft.) = \$1,200+

3 bdm. (1,285 sq.ft.) = \$1,500+

Downtown/77 units/on-site parking/range refrig. d.washer
heat and hot water included

2.) Gables/ 491 Bridge Rd. 1 bdm. (590 sq.ft.) = \$ 800

2 bdm. (1,900 sq.ft.) = \$1,000

3 bdm. = \$1,200

Garden and townhouse/ 50 units/on-site parking/heat and hot water included

3.) 67 West Street / 1 bdm. (no utes) \$650-\$800

Garden style/21 units/ on-site parking/ range, refrig.

12 Fruit Street 1 bdm. (no utes) \$630-\$750

2 bdm. (no utes) \$825

Garden style/ 12 units/ on-site parking/ range, refrig.

5.) 70 Riverside Street 2 bdm. (no utes) \$700

3 bdm. (no utes.) \$810

Townhouse/6 units/on-site parking/ range, refrig. d.washer

6.) Damon Road 1 bdm. (no utes) \$575-675

2 bdm. (no utes) \$750-850

Garden Style/16 units/ on-site parking/ range,refrig.

7.) Hampton Gardens 1 bdm. (no utes.) \$765+

73 Barrett Street 2 bdms. (no utes.) \$ 950+

3 bdms. (no utes.) \$ 1,175

4 bdms. (no utes). \$1,225

Garden and townhouse/ 207 units/ on-site parking/ range, refrig. d.washer

8.) 312 Hatfield Street 1 bdm. \$825+

2 bdm. \$925+

Garden and townhouse/72 units heat and hot water incl.

On-site parking, range, refrig, dishwasher
9.) 69-81 Prospect Street 1 bdm. \$800+
2 bdm. \$900+

Garden/ 33 units/ no parking, range refrig, heat/hot water included

Sample Rental Rates in Homes and Condominiums

Apartment Unit	Monthly rental rate, w/out utilities
1 bedroom	\$ 650 - \$ 900
2 bedroom	\$ 800 - \$ 1,300
3 bedroom	\$ 900 - \$ 1,400

Current Rental Inventory Assessment

A variety of apartment property types exist in Northampton. Included are apartment buildings with numbers of units, as well as two, three and four-family homes and single family homes made available for rent.

The majority of the units described above, tend to be more affordable than others in the inventory. This is due to the fact that most were either constructed or renovated between the early 1970's and the early 1990's. Many landlords have rented to the same tenant(s) over a long period of time and have not increased rents. This would account for many of the units having lower rents than they could have.

(Market data described above taken from the Appraisal conducted by Bennett Franklin Real Estate Services for the Community Builders, developers of the Northampton State Hospital, in August 2003.)

Normally, there are few apartments available at any one time in Northampton. The presence of approximately 1,500 University of Massachusetts students, in addition to faculty, graduate and Ada Comstock students from Smith College usually impacts the availability of local inventory. Families used to be able to access the inventory at the end of the school years, when the students left for the summer. In the past five years, however, students passed their units along to other students during the summer, to guarantee their availability when they return for the fall sessions.

However, anecdotal information from local rental property managers yields a very different picture. (Telephone interviews 11/24/03).

Robinson Real Estate manager of 1500 units in Northampton reports that the rental market is presently extremely slow. Having worked at this agency for 7 years, this is the slowest activity level the partner interviewed has ever seen. He attributes this to the following factors:

- Uncertain economy/war
- Lack of job opportunities
- Northampton rents have gotten too high
- Low interest rates are providing choices for people to purchase homes rather than paying high rents
- UMass students are reluctant to travel across the Coolidge Bridge which is under construction and causes long traffic delays

The company currently has an advertisement running in the local newspaper describing 9 units for rent and no calls are being received. The manager spoke of time in the late 1990's until this past spring where activity was "crazy" with constant phone calls and appointments. He said they currently have 40 units available, where they would have had 5 last year. He also has 15 houses available for rent, when the inventory is usually 2 or 3. He described the current situation as "unheard of".

The manager depicted his usual client base as professionals including some Smith faculty and people looking to be close to the I-91 corridor. He said that for a time, people were coming up from New York and purchasing properties at a level that necessitated their having to charge high rents, which they are not able to get. He said he has landlords calling him daily asking why their properties are not rented. He said people have reached the limit of what they can pay for rent, and when the amount gets too high, they are choosing to purchase homes instead. The low interest rates for home purchase have been a big factor allowing people to refuse to pay high rents.

Suzanne of Suzanne and Company, overseers of 500 local rental units since 1997, corroborates these observations. She indicates that the market has stabilized over the past 6 months attributing this to the low interest rates for purchase, the lack of job opportunities and units being converted to condos. She said rents are coming down and landlords are making concessions in order to find tenants, such as allowing pets. She confirmed not seeing as many University of Massachusetts students, noting that with the tuition and fee increases at the Campus, more students are opting to commute from home. She said rents in Northampton have peaked and people are saying no to the higher rates. She also observed that people from New York (used to paying higher rates) are no longer coming due to the lack of job opportunities. She said that effects of the economy take longer to reach Northampton than in other locations, but that it is having an impact. Suzanne anticipates that the vacancy rate is increasing and she has an unprecedented 50 apartments available.

Hampshire Property Management Group rents the units they manage, totaling approximately 75-100 units. The person interviewed there also reports slow activity. She attributed low interest rates, pricing too high and lack of tenant movement.

Property Management Co.	1998 (avgs.)	2003
Robinson Realty - rates do not include utes.	1 bdm. \$ 550 2 bdm. \$ 700 3 bdm. \$ 800 4 \$ 1,100	\$ 600-650 \$ 800-850 \$ 1,000 few/ \$ 1,400
Hampshire Property Management	1 bdm. \$ 550 2 bdm. \$ 650 3 bdm. \$ 850 4 bdm. None	\$ 750-900 \$ 950-1,050 \$ 975 (old bldg. no pkg. Usually 1,400 4 bdm./ SF houses only \$1,700-2,000
Suzanne & Company	1 bdm. 550-700 2 bdm. 750-1,000 3 bdm. few 4 bdm. none	\$ 550+ \$ 750+ few none

Despite the current lull (11/03) all personnel interviewed expected the market to revitalize next spring, if not before. All agreed that Easthampton is the area where activity is booming, as at least for awhile, it remains more affordable than Northampton.

Area realtors and housing search workers agree, few low income families and individuals are able to find housing in Northampton. Hopefully, with the Housing Authority units coming back on line, the unfreezing of the Section 8 vouchers and new production, that situation will improve.

With the exception of Valley Community Development's Millbank 2 Project (see Projects Underway section), there has been no multi-family rental construction. In fact, many units have been converted to condominium ownership. The other complicating factor is the (planned) removal of 62 units of market rate affordable rental housing from the West Street neighborhood to accommodate Smith College's campus expansion for a Science and Engineering Complex.

Smith has recently made a commitment, however, to replace those units and assist with the relocation of those tenants that will be displaced by the demolition of those buildings.

The demand, as observed by housing search workers assisting low income people, is for 2 and 3 bedroom units. According to market rate rental agents, the demand is for 2 bedroom units. It was noted however, that often people unable to afford one bedroom units will opt for a two bedroom and a roommate to help cover expenses.

Expiring Use

The City continues to work diligently to maintain the affordability of Country Lane Estates (formerly Meadowbrook). The 252 unit apartment was purchased 2 years ago by Aspen Square Management from W. Springfield. After expressing their intention to pre-pay the mortgage and convert the complex to market rate, the Mayor lobbied and secured State resources that the new owners could apply to keeping the units affordable. At this time, negotiations continue.

The other expiring use property in the City, Hampton Gardens, contains 207 units. In order to compensate for the owners mortgage prepayment and conversion to market rate in 1999, the Northampton Affordable Housing Trust fund was created. The fund, now approaching its second year of operation, is assisting 22 families with rental subsidies that enable them to live affordably at the complex.

New Projects Underway/ Rental Opportunities Planned

The Northampton Housing Partnership, the Office of Planning and Development, Valley Community Development Corporation and HAP, have been working continuously to bring new affordable housing to the City. Many of those efforts are finally coming to fruition.

Paradise Pond Apartments: It has always been a dream for those administering Jessie's House, the City's only homeless shelter for families, to create transitional and permanent housing for formerly homeless families. Jessie's House is located on a parcel owned by

the Northampton Housing Authority. Directly behind that parcel is land abutting Smith College and the Northampton State Hospital property. The parcel is one of four that were deeded to the Housing Authority through the disposition legislation associated with the transfer and redevelopment of the State hospital.

In the spring of 2003, the NHA issued a Request for Proposals to develop the parcel. HAP (previously the Hampden Hampshire Housing Partnership, a regional housing agency based in Springfield) responded, in conjunction with the Center for Human Development (program administrators of Jessie's House). The proposal is to create 12 units of family subsidized rental housing with support services provided by the Jessie's House program. Funding proposals are pending from the Federal McKinney Program through the Three County Continuum of Care, the Mass. Dept. of Housing and Community Development and Smith College. A local Community Development Block grant contribution has been earmarked. (Local CDBG of \$75,000 committed. (143 West Street)

Milbank 2: The Valley CDC has worked many years towards creating new downtown affordable housing. Construction is underway on the rehabilitation of 6 existing rowhouse units, the upgrade of 4 condominium in an adjacent building (bringing the Valley's ownership to 8 of 12 condo units/ the Housing Authority owns the other 4) and new construction of 10 additional family units. These 24 new and improved units should be on line next spring. (79 Michelman Ave. & Milbank Condominiums)

3.) Special Needs Housing/ 689 Allocation: The Northampton Housing Authority is moving ahead with the second State Hospital parcel on Grove Street. The Authority received an allocation of nine 689 units in the late 1990's. It was always the hope that they could be utilized in conjunction with the State hospital redevelopment. The 6 one story units are being designed by an Architect selected by the Mass. Department of Housing and Community Development. These units should be under construction in 2004, possible available late in the year, or early in 2005.

4.) Ice Pond Parcels: The first residential sub-division being created through the State hospital redevelopment process by The Community Builders is underway. The 26 lot subdivision has been permitted and funding sources secured. Affordable housing will be constructed on six of the lots and sold to First Time Homebuyers. The lottery was conducted by the Valley CDC, who has contracted with TCB to do the income qualification and marketing. 2 of those homes will contain accessory apartments which will be available for rent (total of 8 affordable units/ 6 homeownership, 2 rental). The parcel is located in the beautiful rural southwest section of the City, with commanding views. It is a wonderful example of mixed income housing that hopefully will become a model for future development. (\$35,000 local CDBG commitment)

SRO Preservation: The retention and improvement of local single room occupancy units has been a long term City goal. This past summer, the Go West building in Florence, was acquired by the Valley CDC. The proposal is to renovate the building into an enhanced SRO, with kitchens and baths in each unit. The commercial space on the first floor shall be retained. The building sits prominently on the corner of this secondary commercial district

and is deteriorated in condition. The 23 units will be reduced to 19, in order to accommodate the new unit layouts. Unfortunately, the permit from the Planning Board to allow a handicapped unit to be installed in the first floor, has been appealed by some local merchants. The appeal is pending. (CDBG commitment \$170,000)

Green Street SRO: Smith College has been negotiating with HER, Inc. to replace an existing SRO building that Smith wishes to purchase to accommodate campus expansion. The existing 14 unit building has been there for years. Smith has offered to build a new enhanced SRO to house those tenants, on a parcel across from Jessie's House. Although the units will be the same in number, therefore, no net gain to the community, we will gain quality enhanced units with on-site parking. The new location is still a walkable distance to downtown. (Local CDBG commitment was provided early on for the Green Street location.)

Village at Hospital / Northampton State Hospital Re-development: Phase One: which is fully funded includes the rehabilitation of 2 existing buildings into 33 apartments. The bedroom composition consists of 16 one bedroom units, 16 two bedroom units and 1 three bedroom units. Work will begin next spring, units to be available in 2004-2005. Total project cost/ \$7,095,953/ \$215,029 per unit. (\$75,000 local CDBG commitment). Phase Two: 31 new construction townhouse units for families and individuals. There will be 6 one bedroom units, and 25 three bedroom units. 19 will be reserved for at or below 50% of area median income. Of these, 10 units will have project-based Section 8 vouchers. 3 units will be reserved for households at or below 30% area median income. 12 units will be reserved for households between 51% and 60% of area median income. Of the 31 units, 6 will be reserved for clients of the Department of Mental Health. Total project cost/ \$7,313,000/ \$235,903 per unit. (Local CDBG commitment \$75,000).

Northampton Independent Living The Community Builders have purchased 6 units in the River Run condominium complex for housing for clients of the Dept. of Mental Health. Funding sources are being sought to cover project costs, as HUD denied the extension of an earlier 811 award given to ServiceNet, Inc. TCB had purchased the units on the understanding the 811 would be re-activated, then the request was denied. Currently, one of the units is housing a DMH client, as they slowly become available through attrition.

Laurel Street Parcel This is another Housing Authority parcel deeded through the State Hospital disposition. It is around the corner from Grove Street. This project is in the planning stages. The proposal at this stage is for 6 duplexes for a total of 12 units, although this may change as the site design evolves. The time table for this would be 2004-2005. No funding sources have been requested as of yet.

Smith Northampton Affordability Partnership At the October (2003) meeting of the Trustees of Smith College, a proposal was approved to create a fund in order to develop replacement housing for the market rate affordable housing that will be demolished to accommodate campus expansion. Currently, Smith owns 68 units in the West Street neighborhood and as many as 36 may be displaced by the first phase of new construction. A committee will be established to solicit and evaluate development

proposals that request funding. This effort was a collaboration between the City, the College and area housing advocates. Now that the framework has been endorsed by the Trustees, efforts can begin to focus on specific projects.

Home Ownership

What does ownership housing cost in Northampton?

Lower value quartile \$115,700

Median value \$144,600

Census Table H75 and H76 "Lower Value Quartile (dollars) for Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units" and "Median Value (dollars) for Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units"

These figures provide a distribution of ownership housing prices for Northampton in 2000. According to the Northampton Assessor's Office, median sales prices for single family homes for the past 5 years were as follows:

Median Sales Prices

Year	Median Sales Price
1999	\$144,000
2000	\$168,200 (revaluation year)
2001	\$168,100
2002	\$169,400
2003	\$220,300 (revaluation year)

Revisiting Census Table H73, the median renter household income, the buying power of local renter households can be determined:

Median renter household income divided by 12 months= monthly income

Monthly income x .30 = the total income available for paying principal, interest, property taxes, insurance and condo fees where applicable

Deduct for monthly insurance, condo fees, property taxes= amount available for mortgage payment

Maximum amount of Mortgage given current interest rates can be determined at:

www.fmcalcs.com/tools-tcc/fanniemae/calculator.html

Assessment concludes after assumption of a 10% down payment on a home (after closing costs of 3-5% of the purchase price).

The First Time Homebuyer Counselor at Valley Community Development Corporation reports that households in Northampton earning 80% of median income can purchase homes in the range of \$132,000.

Data such as this is then compared to the asking prices for the homes in that range in Northampton. Data shown on the Sears Real Estate Service for the month of October 2003 indicate the following single family and condo properties for sale in Northampton.

\$179,900	Single Family	Ranch
\$189,900	Single Family	Cape
\$229,000	Single Family	Farmhouse
\$245,000	Single Family	Ranch
\$259,900	Single Family	Other)
\$279,900	Single Family	Cape
\$285,000	Single Family	Colonial
\$375,000	Single Family	Colonial
\$620,000	Single Family	Cape
\$99,000	Condo	Garden
\$113,900	Condo	Garden
\$119,900	Condo	Hi-Rise
\$129,900	Condo	Garden
\$137,500	Condo	Townhouse
\$159,000	Condo	Townhouse
\$250,000	Condo	Townhouse
\$250,000	Condo	Townhouse
\$250,000	Condo	Townhouse
\$250,000	Condo	Garden
\$259,900	Condo	Garden
\$295,000	Condo	Garden
\$318,900	Condo	Hi-Rise
\$339,900	Condo	Hi-Rise
\$417,900	Condo	Hi-Rise
\$270,000	Multi Family	
\$950,000	Multi Family	

Another current set from Goggins Realty's website for Northampton.

6 bedroom, 3 bed, 1 bath	\$129900
5 room, 2 bed, 1 bath cottage	\$139900
6 room, 3 bed, 1 bath ranch	\$162500
5 room, 2 bed, 2 bath ranch	\$179900
6 room, 3 bed, 1 bath farmhouse	\$179900
5 room, 2 bed, 1 bath cape	\$189900
7 room, 3 bed, 1 bath farmhouse	\$204900
6 room, 3 bed, 1.5 bath cape	\$209900
6 room, 4 bed, 1 bath cape	\$219000
5 room, 2 bed, 1 bath farmhouse	\$229000
4 room, 2 bed, 1 bath ranch	\$245000
6 room, 3 bed, 1.5 bath colonial	\$248000
7 room, 3 bed, 1 bath ranch	\$249900
5 room, 3 bed, 1.5 bath other	\$259900

6 room, 3 bed, 2 bath cape	\$260000
8 room, 5 bed, 2 bath farmhouse	\$275000
7 room, 3 bed, 1 bath colonial	\$275000
4 room, 2 bed, 1.5 bath ranch	\$279900
6 room, 3 bed, 3 bath cape	\$279900
5 room, 2 bed, 1 bath ranch	\$282500
8 room, 3 bed, 2 bath colonial	\$285000
7 room, 5 bed, 3 bath raised ranch	\$299000
8 room, 4 bed, 2.5 bath ranch	\$330000
8 room, 4 bed, 1.5 bath antique home	\$349900
6 room, 3 bed, 1 bath farmhouse	\$349900
8 room, 4 bed, 2.5 bath colonial	\$375000
8 room, 3 bed, 2.5 bath farmhouse	\$425000
7 room, 3 bed, 2.5 bath contemporary	\$440000
8 room, 4 bed, 2.5 bath other	\$449000
7 room, 4 bed, 2 bath cape	\$475000
7 room, 4 bed, 3 bath cottage	\$489900
13 room, 7 bed, 2.5 bath Victorian	\$500000
10 room, 4 bed, 3 bath cape contemporary	\$540000
9 room, 4 bed, 2 bath Victorian	\$575000
10 room, 4 bed, 2.5 bath tudor	\$619000
9 room, 4 bed, 3 bath cape	\$620000
14 room, 5 bed, 4.5 bath Victorian	\$650000
15 room, 6 bed, 4.5 bath contemporary	\$669900

.. (11/23/03 ©2003 MLS Property Information Network, Inc)

Based on this sample, it can be determined that no single family homes would be affordable for purchase by a low or moderate income individual or family. A few of the condominium units are within the range, however, condo fees added to the monthly housing expenditures often make these units unaffordable.

New Projects Underway/ Homeownership Opportunities Planned

Ice Pond, as described above, 6 of the lots in this 27 lot subdivision will be available to low and moderate income First Time Homebuyers. The lottery to select the income eligible families was held November 17, 2003. The Community Builders, having secured \$1,809,000 (\$226,125 cost per unit) will build the homes next spring. The specifications for these homes include 1,586-1,606 sq. ft, 2 story structures with 3 bedrooms, 2-2 ½ baths. This project is included in the overall project scope for the redevelopment of the State Hospital property, although not located on the primary campus parcel. (CDBG \$35,000)

Village at Hospital Hill The overall master plan calls for a mixed-use community consisting of affordable and market rate housing, live-work studios, a child care center, a 60-80 unit assisted living facility for seniors, as well as 476,000 sq. ft. of space accommodating office, retail, light industrial, research and development uses. Full build out is estimated to take place over 10-15 years.

A total of 207 residential units are planned. 100 of those will be single family homes. (107 rental units). Overall, fifty percent of the residential units will be affordable. Seventy five

percent of the rental units and 25% of the homeownership units will be reserved for low and moderate income households, leaving the balance of the units to be sold or rented at market rates. Therefore, 25 affordable homeownership units will be developed. This number includes the 6 on the Ice Pond parcel; 21 lots will be available on the Campus site. It remains to be determined if The Community Builders will build the affordable units themselves.

The Oaks This is a privately developed subdivision that received waivers from the Planning Board for various components in the permitting process. As a result, the Board attached a condition that the development includes affordable units. Of the 70 units planned, 8-10 will be sold as affordable First Time Homebuyer units.

The City's subdivision regulations allow for the creation of affordable housing in exchange for waivers. The guideline for unit creation is 11% of the total number, to reflect what currently exists in the community. This project will get underway in the spring, and Valley CDC has applied for State HOME funds that would allow them to purchase the affordable lots and construct the homes. They will also identify eligible purchasers and conduct the lottery. They will negotiate a contract with the developer to provide those services. (This will assist Valley with agency operating costs, which have suffered greatly with the elimination of the State's CEED program.)

Westhampton Road/Comprehensive Permit The City utilized CDBG and other sources to purchase a track of land to achieve multiple goals: 1) A neighborhood housing buffer from a planned landfill expansion; 2) Tot/lot recreation space; 3) Walking trails; and 4) Affordable housing. The parcel was offered through an RFP and the Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity was selected. Construction is underway for 3 duplex units; affordable homeownership opportunities for families earning 50% or below of area median income.

The City applied for a Comprehensive Permit on behalf of Habitat. The only other comp permit application put forth in Northampton was in 1990 (Pines Edge, HOP Project). (\$160,000 CDBG commitment) One lot will be sold as a market rate lot. The program income from this transaction will allow the City to pursue additional mixed income limited development projects that tend to be too small for larger developers, yet they satisfy a City goal of creating scattered site affordable housing.

Verona Garfield Housing Project This program was included in the same RFP as the project described above. Habitat for Humanity will be developing this parcel also and will be applying in January 2004 to the Zoning Board for a comprehensive permit. This parcel, purchased by the City will contain 3 duplex units to be built by Habitat in conjunction with the Smith Vocational High School Building Program, and one market rate lot. The City will sell the market rate lot to finance other limited development endeavors. (CDBG \$110,000)

Turkey Hill Affordable Housing The Housing Partnership worked successfully with a local private developer to create one affordable duplex unit on a rural parcel. Plans are moving ahead; construction will start in November and be completed next spring. Valley CDC is

involved in identifying eligible households and conducting a lottery. (CDBG commitment \$37,500)

Currently, the City contracts with Valley Community Development Corporation to administer a First Time Homebuyer program. It has been frustrating to counsel families who then end up buying homes outside of Northampton. Seeing these home ownership opportunities here in our community is very exciting!

Ongoing City Commitment

Research and data analysis will continue. With a number of projects in the pipeline, it is prudent to revisit the analysis once they have been built and occupied. At that point, it can be determined which gaps have been filled and which remain.

A specific senior housing needs assessment will be undertaken.

Additionally, the Office of Planning and Development is in the process of updating its Impediments to Fair Housing Analysis, which addresses housing discrimination issues and removing barriers to accessing affordable housing.

The Northampton Housing Partnership has recently revised its Goals and Objectives to guide its work for the coming year and has met monthly since 1990. The Planning and Implementation Sub-Committees of the Partnership continue to move those efforts ahead with extensive volunteer dedication and commitment.

The Northampton Affordable Housing Trust Fund Trustees involve another group of dedicated volunteers that oversee the operation of the fund. They also participate in ongoing discussion with the owners of Hampton Gardens to insure that complex remains affordable and accessible to low income residents.

The Next Step Collaborative will continue to meet to address homelessness in Northampton. This group of housing and homeless service providers has met monthly since 1994, to create and maintain individual emergency shelter programs and support services.

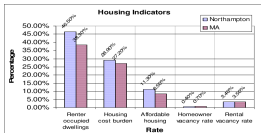
The City will continue to be the lead agent for the Three County Continuum of Care that oversees a regional consortium to address homelessness in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties. The City's Housing Planner works 2 days each week administering that grant (since 1997). The average annual award is \$1,300,000, providing funding to 8-12 area agencies. In excess of 7 million dollars has been secured for the region through this collaborative effort.

Conclusion

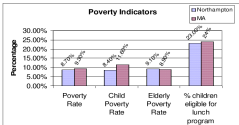
When this document is viewed in conjunction with the City's Consolidated Plan (2000) and the Annual Performance Report for this year's Community Development Block Grant

Program, a complete picture of Northampton's efforts to preserve existing and create new housing opportunities for all income levels in the community is documented.

Housing Indicators: Northampton has 46.5% renter occupied dwellings where the State has only 38.3%. The housing cost burden, which is determined by the median household income as a percent of median home value, was slightly higher for Northampton. Affordable housing consisted of 11.3% of the total number of housing units whereas the State only has 8.5%. Both vacancy rates for homeownership and rental are below State levels.

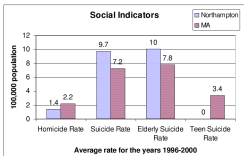


Poverty Indicators: Northampton's poverty rate is 8.7%, which is lower than that of the State. The child poverty rate is also lower but the elderly poverty rate is slightly higher than the State's. The percent of school children eligible for free or reduced price lunch and the number of participants in the WIC Programs were lower for Northampton. In general, Northampton's poverty rates are very similar to State levels.





Social Indicators: The percentage of individuals over 16 who are not employed is 33.9% versus 36.8% in the State. The homicide rate per 100,000 persons (average of 1996 through 2000) was less for Northampton. The suicide rate per 100,000 persons (average of 1996 through 2000) was 9.7, which is higher than the State's rate of 7.2. The number of child abuse cases (both alleged and verified) is less than State levels. Moreover, Northampton's crime rate decreased 10.04 percent from 1998 to 1999. In 1998, 763 total crimes occurred at a rate of 26.6 incidents per 1,000 residents versus 680 total crimes at a rate of 23.93 in 1999.



Crime statistics		
	1998	1999
Total crimes:	763	680
Murders:	1	1
Rapes:	6	16
Robberies:	10	9
Aggravated assaults:	99	73
Burglaries:	110	73
Larcenies:	478	456
Motor vehicle thefts:	59	52
Crime rate: per 1,000 residents	26.6	23.93

Town reported crime stats for 12 months of the year in 1998 and 12 months of the year in 1999.

Economic Development Element

[The 1998 Northampton-Easthampton Economic Development Strategy (Strategy) and the Vision 2020: Vision and Consistency Analysis were approved by the Commonwealth as equivalent Economic Development plan elements under EC418. Equivalent Plan Items: 1) The Strategy's current and future economic profile (Pages 3-25), 2) Goals statements (Strategy, Pages 53-55, Vision 2020, Pages 2-4 & 8), and 3) GIS maps of economic development suitability (Vision 2020 Page16 and 50). The retail analysis portion of this element was designed to fill in gaps that the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Coordinator, and the Planning Board identified in our knowledge base. Some of the data in the inventory is current, and some is needs to be updated in the near future.]

Economic Inventory—Economic and Education Indicators

Economic Profile Summary

The City of Northampton is situated between the Connecticut River and the foothills of the Berkshires 20 miles north of Springfield. Northampton offers a sophisticated rural lifestyle rich in cultural, artistic, academic, and business resources. Northampton features one of the most vibrant downtown centers in New England and was named "Number One Best Small Arts Town in America" by author John Villani and is recognized as one of the top 25 Arts Destinations in the nation by AmericanStyle magazine. Northampton is home to Smith College and is strongly influenced by Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College and the University of Massachusetts as part of the five-college system in the region. The superb quality of life in Northampton contributes to its strong economic base with growing manufacturing, technology and service sectors. The local labor force is diverse, well educated and highly skilled.

Northampton has a population of approximately 30,000 (28,978 people US. Census, 2000 City Census), which has been stable for many years. The population density is 850 people per square mile and is denser than 230 out of 351 communities in Massachusetts. Northampton has a comparable, yet slightly lower, population density than the Town of Greenfield. The community is 90% white which is a slight decrease from the 1990 figure. On the other hand, all other race categories saw a slight increase in population during this time. Lastly, Northampton has a total of 15,081 registered voters of which there are 48.5% Democrats, 7.4% Republicans, and 0.2% other parties.

Demographics

Population	28,978
Total Households	11,880
Median Age	37
Median Household Income	\$41,808
Average Annual Wage	\$32,651
Per Capita Income	\$24,022

Source: 2000 US Census, Massachusetts Division of Employment & Training average annual wage 2002 data

Educational Attainment

High school graduate or higher	88.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	46.1%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census for population 25 years and older

Property Tax Rate

The City has a single tax rate of 16.25. Estimated Fiscal Year 04 rate is \$13 – to be set December 2003.

General Population	1990	2000
Total population	29,289	28,978
% of state total	0.49%	0.46%
Decrease in last decade		-311
% change in last decade		-1.06%
Total under age 18	5,079	4,917
% under age 18	17.34%	16.97%

Racial characteristics	1990	2000
Total white	26,600	26,063
White % of population	91.14%	90.01%
Total black	490	602
Black % of population	1.67%	2.08%
Total Asian	827 *	908
Asian % of population	2.82% *	3.13%
Total Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	--	15
Hawaiian/PI % of population	--	0.05%
Total American Indian/Eskimo	49	88
Am. Indian/Eskimo % of population	0.17%	0.30%
Total Other	29	697
Other % of population	0.10%	2.41%
Total multi-racial	--	589
Multi-racial % of population	--	2.03%

* Includes Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander

Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	1990	2000
Total Hispanic/Latino	1,201	1,518
Hispanic/Latino % of population	4.10%	5.24%

Residents were asked to identify whether they are Hispanic or Latino in a question separate from that which asked their race.

Employment: According to May 2001

figures, Northampton has an unemployment rate of 2.1%, which is a lower rate than 289 of the 351 towns in Massachusetts and is lower than the unemployment rate of the State of Massachusetts at 5.3%. Simultaneously, the total labor force and the number of people employed in Northampton have grown. The sector with the highest number of employees is the service sector which includes health care and education. It also employs a higher percentage than the State. The next highest is retail/wholesale trade at 23.3%. Northampton has seen a decline in the number of employed in government, transportation, communications, utilities, and trade where these sectors have positive percent changes throughout Massachusetts. Only agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining saw a higher percent change compared to the Commonwealth. Massachusetts has had a significantly larger percent change in employment in the construction sector versus Northampton. Furthermore, the percentage of people who are self-employed, work from home, and are part time is greater than of the State.

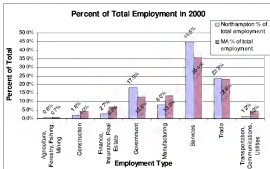
*All information compiled from Commonwealth of Massachusetts sources

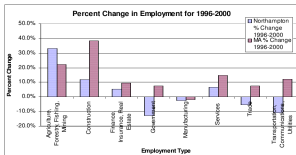
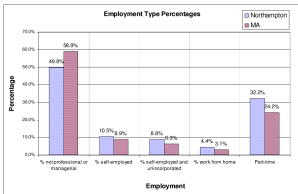
Employment			
	1999	2000	May 2001
Total labor force:	15,430	15,212	15,655
Number employed:	14,972	14,924	15,326
Number unemployed:	458	288	329
Unemployment rate	3%	1.90%	2.10%

Note: Unemployment rates are based on person's place of residence

Employment by Sector	EMPLOYEES	PERCENT
Services (Includes Health Care & Education)	7,868	44.5
Retail/Wholesale Trade	4,133	23.3
Government	3,161	18
Manufacturing	1,422	8
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	476	2.7
Construction	321	1.8
Transportation, Communication, Public Utilities	213	1.2
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	104	.6
Average Annual Wage	\$32,651	
Total Annual Payroll	\$519,350,706	

Massachusetts Division of Employment & Training 2000 data, average annual wage 2002 data





Labor Force Data

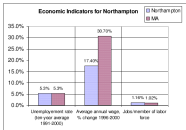
Labor Force (MA DET June 2002)	16,000
Workforce Pull Within 45 mins. Travel Time	414,115
Residents working in Northampton	61%
Unemployment Rate (MA DET June 2002)	2.7%

Massachusetts Division of Employment & Training

Northampton Job Losses from Business Closings

Mass. DET 1996-2000	191
Rapid Response Team 2000-2003	221

Wages: The average annual wage in Northampton is \$29,345 whereas for the state it is \$44,329. The percent change from 1996 to 2000 in the average annual wage was 30.7% for the state and only 17.4% for Northampton. In Northampton there are slightly more jobs per member of the labor force compared with the state.



Average Hourly Earnings

Manufacturing	\$14.44
Durable Goods	\$14.48
Fabricated Metal Products	\$14.95
Nondurable Goods	\$14.39
Paper & Allied Products	\$14.35
Printing & Publishing	\$13.49
Customer Service Call Center (Northampton/Hadley)	\$8.50-\$9

Massachusetts Division of Employment & Training, October 2001

Commercial/Industrial Base


Industrial: 2,212,942 square feet
Commercial: 4,120,267 square feet
Total C/I Building Space: 6,333,209 square feet

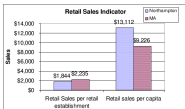
Average Office/Industrial Rental Rates

Class A Industrial Park \$6-8/sf
Class A Downtown Main Street (Upper Floors) \$14-16/sf
Class A Downtown Off Main Street \$12/sf
Hospital Hill Business Park Negotiable – discounts for pioneer tenants
Main St. Florence Class A Office \$18/sf
Main St. Florence Class B & C Office \$8.80-\$12/sf

Average Retail Rental Rates

First Floor Downtown Main Street \$22-\$30/sf
First Floor Downtown Off Main Street \$16-\$18/sf
Pleasant Street \$12-\$18/sf
King Street \$14-\$20/sf
Main Street Florence \$10-\$15/sf

 **Retail Trade:** Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers employ the second highest number of employees and have the highest total sales with \$122 million. Food and Beverage employs that greatest number of employees (693) and has the second highest total sales in Northampton. The largest number of retail businesses in the City is in the category of Clothing & Accessories with 33 businesses. Retail sales per capita were higher for Northampton with \$13,112 compared to \$9,226 for the State. A more detailed retail analysis is included as an appendix to this plan.





Property Tax Rate & Assessed Value: The City has a single tax rate of \$13.90 (estimated). The average FY2003 single-family property tax bill is \$2,589 and has increased by 44 percent since 1995. The average tax bill for a single-family property was \$1,792 in FY 1995 and \$2,589 in FY 2001. Home values have appreciated 28 percent since 1995, from \$129,490 in FY 1995 to \$166,173 in FY 2001 (based on average assessed values of single-family properties in Northampton). The total value of all single-family property was assessed at \$892,848,400.



Education Indicators: Northampton has a wide variety of libraries and museums available to its residents. They include the Botanic Garden of Smith College, Lyman Plant House, Calvin Coolidge Memorial Room, Forbes Library, Historic Northampton, and Smith College Museum of Art. Furthermore, school enrollment has increased 27.9 percent since 1993 at an average of 4.65 percent per year. Furthermore, the Northampton school district spends about \$6,513 per student (data from FY 1999) and \$21,508,558 out of \$47,898,868 per year goes towards school spending. Northampton ranks in the upper 50% of towns in Massachusetts in its spending per student.

Northampton-Smith – Public School District (grades 9-12)

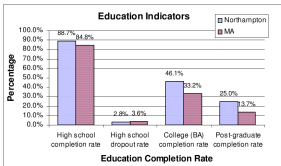
Dropout/Attendance/Exclusions	Plans of High School Graduates - 1999 *				
	District	State	Plan	% of District	% of State
Dropout Rate (%) - 1999	3.1	3.6	Four Year College	0.9	52.8
Attendance Rate (%) - 2001	92.1	94	Two Year College	28.0	20.6
Student Exclusion (Count) - 2000	0	1,412	Work	50.0	16.0
Technology – 2001					
				District	State
			Students per Computer	4.5	5.1
			Classrooms on the Internet (%)	8.6	82.8

Northampton – Public School District (grades PK-12) District

Dropout/Attendance/Exclusions	Plans of High School Graduates - 1999				
	District	State	Plan	% of District	% of State
Dropout Rate (%) - 1999	2.8	3.6	Four Year College	56.7	52.8
Attendance Rate (%) - 2001	95.3	94	Two Year College	22.5	20.6
Student Exclusion (Count) - 2000	0	1,412	Work	3.9	16.0
Technology – 2001					
				District	State
			Students per Computer	6.1	5.1
			Classrooms on the Internet (%)	100	82.8

*Many of the programs at Smith Vocational Agricultural High School provide a focus so that students who enter the workforce directly after high school do so with job and employment skills that academic high school students do not have.

The high school completion rate in Northampton is 88.7% and the high school drop out is 2.8%. 46.1% of the population 25 years and older have completed a Bachelor's degree or higher. Both the college (BA) completion rate and Post-graduate completion rate are higher for Northampton compared to the State. Northampton fairs better than the State of Massachusetts in all education indicator categories.



2000 U.S. Census for population 25 years and older

Economic Profile/Retail Market Analysis

As part of **Grow Smart Northampton**, an economic development consultant prepared a retail market analysis for Northampton to better understand this critical part of Northampton's economy. The full analysis is available as a separate document (available at www.NorthamptonPlanning.org).

Goals

(The City developed detailed goals as part of the Vision 2020 process (discussed earlier). Additional economic development goals and policies/objectives have been updated to reflect additional findings from the Northampton-Easthampton Economic Development Strategy Plan (1998), the Economic Target Area Goals (August 2002), and the Mayor's Economic Development Program (May 2001 - Based in part on interviews with businesses and key city/business leaders/entities conducted by the Mayor's Economic Development Coordinator and approved by City Council).)

Additional Economic Development Goals – Mayor's Economic Development Plan

- Expand business and job retention and attraction.
- Promote a diversified economic base and labor force.
- Facilitate economic development that contributes to a sense of community and long-term sustainability.
- Expand the commercial and industrial land inventory and tax base.
- Create an environment conducive to business investment.

- Form and participate in regional economic development collaborations.

Additional Policies and Objectives

Reinvigorate the manufacturing base—support the expansion of existing manufacturers and industry clusters in the City, including traditional and technology manufacturers.
Position the City to fully participate in the creative economy- recruit new businesses in new media/information technology, arts/entertainment, and other creative sectors.
Focus on business development that supports job creation and a range of job opportunities/advancement for all populations in the City.
Develop a marketing program to promote the city for business development and increase visibility in regional marketing programs.
Support redevelopment of key parcels in the City with significant economic benefits – Northampton State Hospital, Rt. 10 Business Park, and the Three County Fairgrounds (to maintain the viability of the fairgrounds for traditional uses while upgrading the facility and diversifying with complementary uses).
Support redevelopment of Brownfield and underutilized commercial/industrial sites.
Upgrade transportation and public utilities to facilitate expansion of the site inventory in identified growth areas, support priority development projects, and provide adequate telecommunications service throughout the City. Seek state/federal funding sources where appropriate to leverage private investment.
Facilitate problem-solving, permit streamlining and regulatory simplification where appropriate.
Support enhancement of the Downtown Business District – i.e. adequate parking facilities, Business Improvement District, infill development.
Incorporate an evaluation of economic benefits in the adoption of all City policies, programs, and regulations.
Use targeted tax incentives and other state programs to support the City's economic development goals.

Northampton/Easthampton Economic Development Strategy Elements

(These recommendations were excerpted from the 1998 Northampton-Easthampton Economic Development Strategy, available at www.NorthamptonPlanning.org, and are now almost five years old. Many of these elements are currently being implemented. All of the elements and an updated and revised economic development strategy will be developed as part of the comprehensive planning process with broad input and discussion between the business community, the public, and City officials, boards and departments.)

- Initiate a "business calling" program to identify and respond to the needs of at-risk and growing firms.
- Participate in regional workforce development efforts and create a Workforce Task Force to help businesses meet their immediate and longer-term needs for trained employees.
- Initiate a campaign to support and expand the "new media" sector.
- Work with local banks to establish a long term facilities loan pool or special program.
- Explore orderly development along the Route 10 corridor, particularly as the Northampton State Hospital site is developed.
- Look into the feasibility of establishing a business improvement districts (BID) in the central business district.

- o Review recommended improvements to the local permitting processes with planning boards and other relevant entities. Timing is an issue. Areas for permitting process improvements include communications, coordination, speed and reduced permitting requirements. Areas for zoning change include simplification and clarification.
- o Northampton has few available development sites and no substantial vacant building space on the market. Primary opportunities for expanding its supply of commercial and industrial sites are the reuse of Northampton State Hospital and development of the four parcel Northampton Business Park site on Route 10. Move forward on both sites concurrently. The State Hospital site is especially desirable as a model of smart growth and as a site where a proportion of the housing and employment will be targeted to those most in need.
- o Northampton's best available development sites are likely to be absorbed without any city support or intervention.
- o Northampton will need to use creative means to generate development options at other sites.
- o Maintain a comprehensive inventory of available sites and buildings.
- o Maintain a mechanism for maintaining a complete and up-to-date inventory of "market-ready" buildings and sites available to support business growth.
- o Establish a volunteer site location network to assist businesses needing additional space.
- o Expand outreach efforts to help identify businesses facing facility needs and problems.
- o Initiate a campaign to support and expand the "new media" sector (the convergence of video, audio, graphics, and text in a digital rather than analog mode).
- o Establish a Northampton/Easthampton Economic Development Partnership.
- o Consider an economic priority-setting session with the community.

Economic Target Area

In 2002, the City of Northampton joined the Greater Franklin County Economic Target Area. Northampton and Franklin County share some economic commonalities including a shared labor force, a cross border tourism industry, proximity to the I-91 interstate transportation corridor, telecommunications infrastructure needs, and a declining manufacturing sector. We share many similar economic development goals and work collaboratively with Franklin County organizations on regional economic development initiatives. By joining the ETA, Northampton is now able to offer tax incentives available under the Massachusetts Economic Development incentive Program to stimulate job creation and business investment in the City.

The City Council designated four Economic Opportunity Areas under the ETA to facilitate investment in these targeted areas. Additional Economic Opportunity Areas will be designated on an as needed basis.

EOA	Date Designated
Northampton Industrial Park	April 2002
Village at Hospital Hill	April 2002
Spring and Pine Street (Florence)	September 2002
TechAlley (Federal St., Bay State)	September 2002

Economic Development Target Areas

Over the past decade, in **Vision 2020: Vision**, the **Northampton-Easthampton Economic Development Strategy**, and the downtown, Florence, and State Hospital plans, the Planning Board, working with the community and City Council, identified specific areas for economic development and development activities. As part of a comprehensive plan, as well as other City planning efforts, these recommendations should be reexamined to see if they should still represent city policy and to see if other areas should be added.

These areas are, in no particular order:

- The Central Business District and its commercial gateways.
- The King Street Corridor and Damon Road
- Florence Center and its commercial and industrial gateways.
- The Northampton Industrial Park
- The Northampton State Hospital.
- A Route 10 Business Park.
- Existing industrial and commercial zoning districts and existing businesses.
- Additional home occupations and home offices in residential areas.

Economic Development Environmental Suitability Map

The map below shows most of the target areas discussed above, overlain over the Environmental Suitability Map created in this plan. It does not show existing businesses outside of business districts nor home occupations.

Using existing regulatory and planning criteria, several of the land-use related City boards (Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Conservation Commission) have permitted development closer to environmental resources in redevelopment areas than in pristine areas. During the Comprehensive Planning process and other City planning efforts, there needs to be more discussion about appropriate buffer zones from environmental resources in different parts of the city and for different environmental resources.

Future map revisions should include a more detailed assessment of environmental suitability for commercial/industrial development and redevelopment areas.



Economic Suitability

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 and Regeneration
 and Regeneration

Transportation Element

(The **Northampton Transportation Plan (May 2002)** was approved by the Commonwealth as equivalent Transportation Plan elements under EO418. Equivalent plan elements: Regional transportation plan (entire plan), with series of GIS maps and text showing transportation improvements that can be implemented in the next 5 years. This element was designed to fill in gaps that the Planning Board identified in our existing knowledge base and understanding of options.)

As part of **Grow Smart** Northampton, a multidiscipline transportation consultant team prepared a corridor study King Street (Route 5 and 10) from the King Street/North Street intersection to the King Street/Damon Road/Bridge Road intersection. The team consisted of a transportation planner with expertise in bicycle and pedestrian accommodation, a traffic engineer with expertise in signal systems, a highway designer, and a landscape architect.,

The **King Street Corridor Study** is available as a separate document at www.NorthamptonPlanning.org.

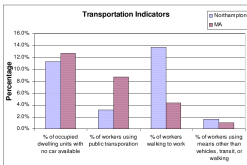


Transportation Indicators: Northampton is located in the Pioneer Valley, known as the crossroads of New England because of its strategic position along the Connecticut River and its excellent transportation facilities. The Massachusetts Turnpike connects the region to Boston and to Albany, New York. Interstate 91 provides direct access to Hartford, Connecticut, and to Brattleboro and points north in Vermont.

The principal highways are U.S. Route 5 and Interstate Route 91, which runs N-S across the state, the State Route 9 running E-W. Amtrak offers daily bus service between Burlington, Vermont, and Springfield, Massachusetts, that connects up to its Springfield-Washington rail service. Freight rail service is available from the Springfield Terminal Railway.

Northampton is a member of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA), which provides fixed route service, and offers paratransit service to Springfield, Worcester, Boston, and Hartford. Vermont Transit Lines connects to Greenfield, Brattleboro, VT and points north, and to Holyoke, Springfield and Hartford, CT.

LaFleur Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility located 1 mile northeast of Northampton, has a 3,506-foot by 50-foot asphalt runway. Peter Pan Bus Lines offers transportation to Logan Airport from Northampton 7 days a week, and connects from Springfield to Hartford and Bradley Airport, and to Kennedy and Laguardia Airports in New York City.



The percent of workers walking to work for Northampton was 13.7%, which is significantly greater than the percentage for the State of Massachusetts. On the other hand, less people use public transportation to get to work and the percent of occupied dwelling units with no car available is less than the State percentage.

APPENDIX—Community Health Indicators (PVPC)

Community Health Indicators	Northampton	MA	+/-	Date as of
<i>Economic Indicators</i>				
Percentage of workers not employed in professional or managerial jobs	48.8%	58.9%	+	2000
Unemployment rate (ten-year average 1991-2000)	5.3%	5.3%	=	1991-2000
Average annual wage	\$29,345	\$44,329	-	2000
Average annual wages in the private sector	\$28,204	\$45,049	-	2000
Retail sales per retail establishment (\$000)	\$1,844	\$2,235	-	1997
Retail payroll as a percent of retail sales	10.9%	10.1%	+	1997
Retail sales per capita	\$13,112	\$9,226	+	1997
Commercial percent of the total tax base	16.3%	20.7%	-	2002
Industrial percent of the total tax base	3.9%	6.0%	-	2002
Average annual wage, percent change 1996-2000	+17.4%	+30.7%	-	1996 to 2000
Part-time employment as a percent of total employment (less than 35 hours per week)	32.2%	24.2%	?	2000
Percent of workers self-employed	10.5%	8.9%	+	2000
Percent of workers self-employed and unincorporated	8.8%	6.3%	+	2000
Percent of persons working from home	4.4%	3.1%	?	2000
Jobs per member of the labor force	1.16	1.02	+	2000
Percent change in number of firms, 1996-2000	+0.8%	+4.5%	-	1996-2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Mining employment (% change 1996-2000 / % of total employment in 2000)	+33.3% 0.6%	+22.0% 0.7%	+	1996-2000
Construction employment (% change 1996-2000 / % of total employment in 2000)	+11.8% 1.8%	+38.4% 4.0%	-	1996-2000
Finance, insurance, and real estate employment (% change 1996-2000 / % of total employment in 2000)	+5.3% 2.7%	+8.6% 6.8%	-	1996-2000
Government employment (% change 1996-2000 / % of total employment in 2000)	-13.0% 17.9%	+7.4% 12.5%	-	1996-2000

Community Health Indicators	Northampton	MA	+/-	Date as of
2000)				
Manufacturing employment (% change 1996-2000 / % of total employment in 2000)	-2.4% 8.0%	-1.6% 13.3%	-	1996-2000
Services employment (% change 1996-2000 / % of total employment in 2000)	+6.6% 44.5%	+14.8% 35.4%	-	1996-2000
Trade employment (% change 1996-2000 / % of total employment in 2000)	-5.3% 23.4%	+7.7% 22.9%	-	1996-2000
Transportation, communications, and utilities employment (% change 1996-2000 / % of total employment in 2000)	-10.9% 1.2%	+12.0% 4.3%	-	1996-2000
Education Indicators				
High school completion rate	88.7%	84.8%	+	2000
High school dropout rate	2.8%	3.6%	+	1999
College (BA) completion rate	46.1%	33.2	+	2000
Post-graduate completion rate	26.0%	13.7%	+	2000
Environmental Indicators				
Size of wildlife habitat areas (acres per capita)	2243 acres	?		2000
Open Space and Recreation Plan in place?	Yes	varies	=	2000
Percentage capacity of landfills	Adequate to 2007	Need 2 million tons capacity by 2006	+	2000
Health Indicators				
Percent of mothers with adequate prenatal care	84.8%	79.1%	+	2000
Total chronic disease-related deaths per 100,000 population	921.9	814.0	-	2000
Alcohol related hospital discharges per 100,000 people	564.0	324.3	-	2000
Infant mortality, deaths per 1,000 births (five-year average of 1996-2000)	2.5	5.0	+	1996 - 2000
Housing Indicators				
Percentage of renter occupied dwellings	46.5%	38.3%	-	2000

Community Health Indicators	Northampton	MA	+/-	Date as of
Housing cost burden (median household income as a percent of median home value)	28.9%	27.2%	-	2000
Affordable housing (Chapter 40B) as a percent of housing units	11.3%	8.5%	+	2002
Homeowner vacancy rate	0.4%	0.7%	-	2000
Rental vacancy rate	3.4%	3.5%	-	2000
Poverty Indicators				
Poverty rate	8.7%	9.3%	+	2000
Child poverty rate	8.4%	11.6%	+	2000
Elder poverty rate	9.1%	8.9%	-	2000
WIC Program Participation per 1,000 population	1.1	1.9	+	2001
Percent of school children eligible for free or reduced price lunch	23.0%	24.0%	+	2000
Social Indicators				
Percentage of households that are headed by a woman	10.1%	11.9%	?	2000
Percentage of individuals over 16 who are not employed	33.9%	36.8%	+	2000
Homicide rate per 100,000 persons (average of 1996 through 2000)	1.4	2.2	+	1996 - 2000
Elderly (over 64) suicide rate per 100,000 elders (average of 1996 through 2000)	10.0	7.8	-	1996 - 2000
Teen suicide rate (10-19) per 100,000 teens (average of 1996 through 2000)	0.0	3.4	+	1996 - 2000
Suicide rate per 100,000 persons (average of 1996 through 2000)	9.7	7.2	-	1996 - 2000
Alleged cases of child abuse per 1,000 children	61.2	63.5	+	1997
Verified cases of child abuse per 1,000 children	14.4	18.3	+	1997
Dependant children per family	1.68	1.85	?	2000
Number of arts or cultural events/performances at public sites	500/yr	?	?	2002
Number of public recreational events	200 progs/yr	?	?	2002
Transportation Indicators				

Community Health Indicators	Northampton	MA	+/-	Date as of
Percentage of occupied dwelling units with no car available	11.3%	12.7%	?	2000
Road conditions-level of service (average of pavement conditions index)	73	72		
Percent of workers using public transportation	3.2%	8.7%	-	2000
Percent of workers walking to work	13.7%	4.3%	+	2000
Percent of workers using means other than vehicles, transit, or walking	1.6%	1.0%	+	2000

Source: Community Indicators (PVPC, 1/2003), using U.S. Census, DET, PVPC, City, and other Commonwealth sources. See Community Indicator Report (at www.NorthamptonPlanning.org) for full citations.